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WHY I BELIEVE

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A PORTRAIT OF SIX CHRISTIAN HEROES
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WHY I BELIEVE

by Kenneth Ingram

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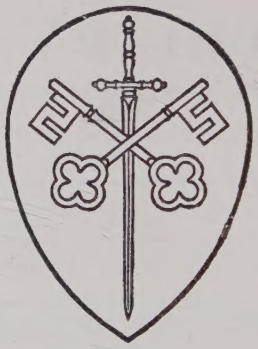

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TO SYBIL THORNDIKE

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK. BECAUSE IT WAS SHE WHO FIRST READ THE MANUSCRIPT, AND SHE WHO ENCOURAGED ME TO BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE WORTH WHILE TO PRESENT IT IN BOOK-FORM

THIS is entirely an amateur book. It has no authority, and it merely presents the reasons which a very ordinary man has thought out for himself in regard to his beliefs. Any book which is worthy of its kind is prepared to run the gauntlet of criticism, and this apologia is intended in no way to serve as a white flag. I am only anxious to make clear that the book lays no claim to theological skill or to any degree of infallibility, and indeed it is rather on account of its inexpert character that I have decided to let it enter through the gateway of publication, believing that perhaps it may have a use as a purely independent testimony.

KENNETH INGRAM

May 2, 1927

WHY I BELIEVE

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PART ONE

THE CASE FOR CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER ONE

The basis of proof

§ 1.

IN any examination as to our beliefs we must first agree as to what we actually mean when we speak of "proof" or "knowledge," of "probability" or "faith." And, to reach such agreement, we must further consider the faculties which we exercise when we arrive at these conclusions. We shall be obliged in these pages to deal with this inquiry in a summary manner, since the amount of ground which we have to cover is so large. There are many different classifications which we could make in defining our various faculties. But I have chosen a form of classification which seems, under the circumstances, to be the clearest and simplest.

The most usual method of obtaining knowledge is through our physical senses. I go into a room and I see something standing there which I touch. I call it a table. There are two distinct processes at work in this observation. First my eyes see and my fingers touch a solid substance. My nerves then telegraph the information to the brain, and my brain decides that this is a table: the name, of course, does not matter. The second process is simply that of the brain determining and interpreting the meaning of what my physical senses have contacted.

The second process is usually so simultaneous that we are inclined to forget that it is distinct. The importance of the distinction, however, is that the

first process—the sensation—is more reliable than the second; or, in other words, if there is any uncertainty or inaccuracy at all, it is in the second process, and not in the first, that it occurs. For example, my eyes may see certain musical notes on a printed paper. The result is telegraphed to the brain. But the brain may send the wrong answer—it often does so in the case of more difficult chords, so that I play wrong notes. The actual sensation is obvious; the interpretation of a sensation is more difficult than the sensation, except where it is a type of sensation, like that of touching a table, with which my mind has grown familiar by constant practice.

This second process, the interpretation by the brain, becomes comparatively instantaneous and automatic by continual use. We may call it *instinctive reasoning*. There often arise, however, instances in which the process is much more deliberate, and in which the interpretation is consciously distinct, so that eventually there comes into play what we may describe as a separate faculty.

I go into the same room and I see a vase of flowers on the floor, near the table, lying on the ground, with the water from the vase spilt and some of the flowers scattered. Previously I had seen the vase on the table. I know that no one else has entered the room between the times when I saw the vase on the table and when I saw it on the floor. I also see a window open and observe that a strong wind is blowing through it into the room. Accordingly I conclude that the cause of the mishap to the vase and the flowers, and of the spilt water is the wind which the open window has let through into the room.

This we call the faculty of *reason*.

So far we have been dealing with easy, everyday occurrences, which are not difficult to define. We

must pass on at once to consider a further faculty, however, which is not so familiar.

A theft has been committed in my office, and I am obliged to interview the staff in order to try to discover whether any of them is the culprit. A clerk comes into my room, and I ask him point-blank whether he is guilty. He looks straight into my face and says, "No." His manner is frank and his look is sincere, and I suddenly become convinced that he is telling the truth. I make up my mind that he is not the culprit.

Here we have the genesis of a third faculty, although we must notice that all these faculties work so closely together that it is often possible to confuse them. It may be said, indeed, that this is only the same process at work—that I see the clerk's face, and that I reason, from past experience, that people who look one straight in the face and answer frankly are usually people who tell the truth, and that therefore I am only using my reason as based on my past experience. We have here, however, something which functions further than the reason, and we observe, therefore, the emergence of another process.

It is a process, or a faculty, which can work apart from any communication through the physical or reasoning senses.

One day, for instance, I may vividly recall a particular event and I may speak of it to a friend who is with me. My friend exclaims, "How extraordinary! I was thinking of just the same thing before you spoke." This communication of ideas without speech or sign, or any apparent physical method, is called telepathy. It does not greatly matter that science is not as yet convinced as to the existence of telepathy. For most of us it is a familiar experience. And in our classification we may include it under the functions of this third and extremely subtle faculty which we are now examining.

I go into a room where there are a number of people, and become aware, without any word being spoken, that they are unfriendly to me and that there is present what I call an "uncomfortable atmosphere." Or suddenly I may encounter a new idea which instantaneously, without any conscious reasoning process, reveals itself to me as a true solution of some problem. This is a difficult faculty to define precisely, because its nature is delicate, but, in varying degrees, we all have experience of it. It is, as we have seen, quite possible to say that it is only a quick form of reasoning. But this is a confusion, due to the fact that all our faculties are closely interwoven.

It is time that we gave it a name, and the most accurate name is *intuitive consciousness*. We define it simply as the faculty by which a conviction is instantaneously implanted in our minds.

There are two other processes which must be named before our category is sufficiently complete.

I hear a piece of music and it appeals to me as exceptionally beautiful. This induces, but is distinct from, physical sensation, and we call it an *emotion*, the same process which takes place when I become enthusiastic, or angry, or happy, or frightened.

Secondly, I go to a play where I hear sentiments expressed against the continuation of the capitalist state, a form of government, which, we will assume, I hold to be sacred. Nevertheless, through want of courage and a desire to be popular, I join in applauding doctrines which I hold to be pernicious. When I return home I am profoundly shocked that I allowed myself to behave so falsely to my principles. This faculty, again, we can classify separately as *conscience*. In our particular inquiry we shall be concerned very little with either the emotions or the conscience. It is desirable, however, that we should carefully distinguish

them from the other faculties with which they are occasionally confused.

For example, when I go and hear a piece of music, I may be so exhilarated and excited by it that I am convinced it is a masterpiece. Again, if I happen to be a sabbatarian, I may feel sure that I have sinned when I play lawn tennis on a Sunday afternoon. In neither case is this the operation of the intuitive consciousness: in the first example the emotions are the faculty used, and in the second case the conscience. Some people are, indeed, unable to distinguish between the emotions and the intuitive consciousness, and accordingly deny the existence of the latter faculty. The only justification for such denial will be to show that everything we claim to derive from the intuitive consciousness is actually reached through one of the other faculties. Presently we shall see that this is not so, but that we all, in varying degrees, become aware of convictions which cannot by any possible means be traced wholly to instinctive reason, to reason, emotion, or conscience.

§ 2.

We can now form some preliminary estimate of the values of these different faculties, so as to decide which of them produces the most reliable evidence, and which form of evidence we are to consider to be the nearest to absolute knowledge.

It is at once obvious that the process on which we place most reliance is that of observation by the physical senses plus instinctive reasoning—the first of the faculties which we defined. If I see a man cross the road I say that I *know* he performed this act. I call it *knowledge*. It is not absolute knowledge, because my instinctive reasoning sometimes errs, as we have

observed. But I regard it as the fullest proof, much fuller proof than if someone else tells me he has seen the man cross the road.

The second process is that of *reason*. When I see the open window and the vase of flowers on the floor, and when I remember that no one else has been in the room, and that a wind blowing into a room does sometimes overturn ornaments, my mind compares this evidence and arrives at the conclusion that the wind caused this particular disaster. But although, in this instance, my reason may have arrived at an accurate explanation, there is plenty of opportunity for error. Someone may, after all, have entered the room when I was not looking, and may have thrown the vase on the floor. A cat may have crept through the window, knocked the vase over, and gone out again. In fact, my conclusion is a little less certain than if by my physical senses I had actually seen the vase blown down from the table. I can only say that this is the *probable* explanation.

Reason, indeed, can lead us to comparative certainty only where it is in possession of all the facts. In what are called exact sciences, where all the facts are at our disposal, we can arrive by reason at knowledge. We can add up a number of figures and be sure, if we do the addition accurately, that the result is the true sum. We can measure precise distances. We can tell the time at which the sun will set on a particular day, or how long it will take for a car, travelling at a certain speed, to reach its destination. But outside these exact sciences the answer of reason is less sure.

And this, as we have seen, is because there may exist unsuspected facts which will entirely disturb our reasoning deductions. Let us suppose that I wish to build up a garden wall, that this task consists of putting together 1,000 bricks, and that it takes one man exactly

one minute to put each brick in its place. By reason I then arrive at the calculation that one man will take 1,000 minutes to complete the work. I go on to calculate that two men would take only 500 minutes, and, were I to follow the purely mathematical process, I might argue that, if I had 1,000 men, I could have the wall built in one minute. But this would not be true. My reason would have led me astray, because it would have failed to take into account a new factor—namely, that, in the limited space of my garden, a thousand men would get in each other's way, and there would be such confusion that the wall would probably not be built at all.

Now, in this simple instance, my reason would certainly have anticipated such a consideration, so that I should never have been such a fool as to suppose that the wall could be built in a minute. Nevertheless, the illustration shows us what is continually happening when we use our reason, outside the exact sciences. We fail to make allowances for one or more of the influences which play upon and alter the conclusions. We can never be quite sure that we have all the facts, and therefore usually we can arrive only at probabilities. That is why in most controversies, such as free trade and protection, there are always to be found arguments on either side. The evidence is too vast to be brought *in toto* into court, and our reason cannot therefore decide absolutely what is, and what is not, the true answer.

We need not waste any time considering the value of the emotions in arriving at truth, because no one pretends that the emotions are a guide in this respect. We appreciate that a man who is violently in love will regard the object of his affections with a want of discrimination, and that a man who is violently angry will fail to see any justice or good in that which has excited

his anger. The great danger of the emotions as a guide is that their conclusions are impermanent. Our moods continually change, and the impressions which are conveyed through our emotions are accordingly affected. The tendency of the emotional faculties to alter is one way in which they can be distinguished from the intuitional consciousness, which is inherently consistent.

Similarly we cannot set a high value, so far as the discovery of truth is concerned, on the *conscience*, because this faculty depends largely on the hereditary teaching and environment of the individual. A puritan young man would have a violent twinge of conscience if he played lawn tennis on a Sunday; but, later on, he might change his views from Puritanism to Mohammedanism, and, as a Mohammedan, he would not regard Sunday as a sacred or solemn day. His conscience would become entirely silent when he played Sabbath tennis, and would have therefore entirely shifted its position. Men have committed what we believe to be crimes, on purely conscientious grounds. If a person happens to believe what we believe to be true we are apt to say that his conscience is instructing him correctly. But this is because the beliefs which direct his conscience are, in our opinion, true, and not because his conscience, of itself, is a safe guide. In fact, next to the emotions, the conscience is the most relative and subjective of all faculties—it depends, that is to say, on our particular circumstances and convictions at the time.

So far we have been assigning values with which most people will agree. But when we come to the case of the *intuitional consciousness* the difference of opinion will probably be wide. Some, as we have seen, altogether deny the existence of this faculty and declare that it is merely an emotion or a form of reasoning; others,

while admitting its presence, will declare that it is unreliable and constantly leads to illusion and error. "When you look into the face of your clerk and are suddenly aware that he is innocent," they will say, "you may be utterly deceived. Another person may be intuitively convinced that he is guilty. It may be an interesting process, but as a means of arriving at truth it is utterly valueless. A lunatic may be equally convinced that he is Julius Cæsar or William Shakespere."

It is impossible, however, to dismiss the intuitive consciousness so lightly as this. For there are three claims to be considered in connexion with it. First, it makes us aware of information which by no other faculty could we obtain; secondly, its revelations are very rarely disproved and are often subsequently proved to have been correct; and, thirdly, it brings with it a sense of conviction which is, anyhow, as great as the reliance which we place on the physical senses.

It makes us aware of information which we could not by any other means obtain. It is possible that there are people who have never become conscious of friendly or unfriendly atmospheres, or of any intense and sudden impressions of this kind. But there is one experience which is common to all of us. We are all conscious of ourselves. Indeed, this is the basis of our whole belief, since without it, all human thought and action would be paralysed. Before we do anything of any kind we must exist. If I am merely a phantom in someone else's dream, it is useless for me to consider anything, since I am not there to do so.

Now, this consciousness of myself may be fed by other influences—I am confirmed, for instance, in my consciousness by the experience that there is something which is continually receiving sensations, and I observe that other people recognise my presence. But the intuitive consciousness goes further than this: it is

always, as we have seen, associated with other faculties, but it goes so much further that it becomes distinct from them. Beyond this realisation, in fact, that there is something continuously receiving impressions which I call "myself"—is a consciousness of myself as an existing personality. And by no possible means can any other faculty give me this belief. The consciousness must come before any reasoning process, for otherwise I should be saying: "I am, because I think," forgetting that the first word begs the question.

Secondly, this conscious sense, when it occurs, is frequently confirmed by other means. This claim must rest largely on a personal confession of faith. I can only say, for myself, that I have rarely, if ever, found that my intuitive consciousness led me astray. My own experience has certainly been that the intuition is almost invariably proved to have been correct.

And, thirdly, it arouses, whenever it does function, a strong sense of conviction. I do not, for instance, merely say to myself: "I must assume that I exist," or, "As something is continuously receiving impressions from outside, I conclude that I exist." Nor do I simply imagine my own existence to be a reality because I observe that other people assume that I am there. Far beyond any such logical deduction is an active and vivid consciousness that I am an actual being and that, though I have changed and developed, I am the same being as existed years ago. *There is nothing of which I am more consciously certain than this reality of my own continuous existence.*

§ 3.

Now this suggests that, however rarely it may operate, and however difficult it may be at times to distinguish from emotion, or conscience, or instinctive

reasoning, intuitive consciousness is a highly valuable means of acquiring knowledge.

We will not, however, press a claim which many people would dispute, because we can at once pass on to a new factor which we call *confirmation*.

When I have reasoned that the vase of flowers was overturned by the wind, I may replace the vase on the table and a moment later, the window being still open, may actually see the vase blown down. Here my reason has been *confirmed* by my physical senses.

Again, I may enter the room where some people are seated and become suddenly aware that they have unfriendly feelings towards me. Later on I may by some means learn that they have an intense aversion towards all natives of Great Britain. As I am a native of Great Britain, I argue that they dislike me, and my intuitive consciousness of their unfriendliness has, therefore, been *confirmed* by my physical senses and reason.

Confirmation establishes so much greater a degree of probability that we usually call it knowledge. If three people independently add up a number of figures and arrive at the same result, we assume that their answer is correct. The possibility that each of the three persons made an equal miscalculation is so remote that we can discard it. In fact, confirmation is one of the greatest proofs we possess, and the larger the sources of confirmation—the more people, in fact, who separately arrive at the same conclusion—the greater is the proof.

This consideration brings us face to face with a new factor, that of *external authority*.

It will at once be evident that we regard external authority in many different ways, sometimes accepting it absolutely and sometimes rejecting it. For example, I may wish to go to Mallaig in the Western Highlands. I look up Bradshaw and see that a train arrives there at

half-past six in the evening. I make all my plans accordingly. I trust absolutely to the statement in Bradshaw in all particulars.

Again, I am walking in a part of the country with which I am unfamiliar. I ask a man whom I meet which is the way to a certain town. I have never seen the man before, and he does not answer me convincingly. But there is no one else about and no sign-posts, and I carry out his directions.

A stranger stops me in the street and informs me that he is the Stuart heir to the English throne. I assume that he is a lunatic or an impostor, and disbelieve him. I pass on at once, before he has time to beg for money.

Now, in the case of Bradshaw I have accepted external authority absolutely, and without any confirming proof—as I may never have been to Mallaig before, or known that the railway ran there. I do so because I am aware that Bradshaw is a recognised authority, and that it has been recognised as an authority for many years by a large number of people who have usually found its statements accurate. Also, no other authority, so far as I know, makes a contradictory statement about this train. If I give a word to this conviction I call it *faith*—because I have not as yet confirmed it by travelling myself to Mallaig, and I have therefore not yet obtained the evidence of my physical senses that the train actually arrives at the time stated.

I have not the same amount of faith in the directions of the man I meet on the road. I only *accept* his assertions because I have no other evidence.

I exercise my reason in regard to the gentleman who assures me he is the rightful King of England, and reject his claim altogether.

And, in the previous case of the clerk who inspired me with a sense of his honesty, I believe, or have faith

in him, because of my intuitive consciousness. It is assumed he has, of course, only just come to my office, so that I have no previous experience as to his character.

§ 4.

It only remains for us generally to sum up the conclusions at which we have arrived.

We have noted that, though we cannot have absolute knowledge, there is certain evidence which we describe as knowledge. We so define the evidence which comes through our physical senses. Confirmation of one faculty by another, or of external authority by an internal faculty, we also regard as comparatively certain.

When, therefore, our intuitive consciousness is confirmed in either of these ways, we are able to place a strong reliance on it. And we observe that this consciousness makes us aware of things which our other faculties could not reach, and gives us a sense of extreme conviction.

Reason of itself, except in exact sciences, will only give us probabilities, because the evidence is normally too complicated to avoid all chance of error. Reason is of the utmost value, however, in checking the evidence of the other faculties, and thus of being a confirming factor.

We have faith in the statements of external authority so far as one or more of our faculties confirm our faith in the authority itself.

This establishes certain broad principles which we can now apply. We shall have to appeal chiefly to the faculty of reason, and therefore only to probabilities, because, in a book, neither the physical senses nor the intuitive consciousness of the reader can directly be reached. But that will serve our purpose—namely, to show the reasonableness and probability of our conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

The evidence of God

§ 1.

IT is unfortunate that the moment an honest inquirer tries to construct a philosophy or religious belief, he is met with an immediate problem which his faculties are unable to solve. Thus, the foundation on which any kind of creed should be built is a foundation-stone which refuses to be laid. The fundamental question which any theological philosophy is at once called upon to explain is the secret of the universe, how and why creation came into existence, whether a Power controls and designs life, or whether life is an evolutionary accident. Neither our physical senses, our reason, nor our intuitional consciousness are capable of giving a complete answer to this question, and, indeed, the last thing we should suppose is that they would so be capable. Any explanation as to the infinite which our finite minds could comprehend would at once be contradictory and therefore false, and this difficulty we must accept as inevitable, unless we have a very inaccurate idea as to the breadth and ability of our mental capacities.

This initial dilemma has been, of course, the rock on which agnosticism has built its case. It is so strong a rock that, at first sight, it appears to be irremovable. Herbert Spencer, the most efficient of the Victorian agnostics, classified* the possible explanations of the origin of the universe into three—the theist, the

* *First Principles.*

atheist, and the pantheist—and has argued that they are all incredible. If the secret is unknowable, agnosticism seems to be the only logical attitude to adopt. And a large element of intellectual opinion to-day appears to have taken up that standpoint.

When we come to look into the agnostic case more closely, however, we begin to detect a serious flaw, which, as we investigate it further, should gradually alter the whole of our conclusion. Stated crudely it is this: It is true that the infinite cannot be understood or explained by finite minds, and that any case which is built up on deductions from such an explanation is a conclusion based mainly on an assumption. But it does not follow that, because the whole is not known, we cannot discover fragments of truth and piece together a knowledge as to part of the whole. In other words, we can build up a case on inductive methods, and follow the course which science has adopted in all its branches.

It is important to notice that this is indeed what science does: it refutes the Spencer argument. We know scarcely anything of the nature of life, and yet we procreate and nurture and protect life. We are vastly ignorant of the energy which we call electricity, but we can use it to drive trains and light cities. We do not know, and we probably could not comprehend, the whole truth even of the physical nature of the universe; yet we can tell when a solar eclipse will take place, and when it is spring on the planet Mars. In fact, all our knowledge is partial, and yet it is often effective. Instead of being paralysed into agnosticism by realising that, at most, we can know but very little, we have taken such knowledge as we had, and gradually added to it.

Let us see whether we cannot apply the same process to the religious problem.

§ 2.

I must make it clear at the outset that largely this inquiry is a personal apologia rather than an exhaustive treatise, and that therefore I shall merely describe in outline the reasons which have led me to believe in God, without attempting to reproduce the several other arguments which are often used in this controversy.

Let us first make sure that we fully understand the difficulty with which we are faced.

Our physical senses could not make us aware of God, since, assuming for the moment that we have proved his existence, he would lie almost entirely outside their minute range: we can only see and hear and taste and feel objects immediately within our reach and of a strictly physical nature. Our reason could not make us aware of God, for reason can only normally arrive at probabilities, and, in any case, can only operate where it has evidence which one of the other faculties can supply. And our consciousness cannot make us fully aware of God, for, if there is a God, he is infinite, and the tiny mirror of our consciousness could no more reflect God than a pool of water could reflect the whole of the sky.

It is worth while emphasising this inevitable failure of our faculties to make us aware of God, because popular disbelief in God is often based on the argument that there cannot be a God since we are unaware of his presence. This is obviously so foolish a conclusion that it should not be necessary to draw attention to it: if our senses or reason or consciousness made us suppose that we were wholly aware of the infinite deity, we could be quite sure that it was not the infinite deity of whom we were aware. Presently we shall meet with an exception to this law—but, for the moment, we can safely say that nothing finite can

comprehend what is infinite: it would be a sheer contradiction.

And yet this argument is used popularly in many forms. Men deny an intelligent God because nature is seen under certain aspects to be cruel and apparently wasteful, because wars are allowed to ravage humanity, or because there are earthquakes and tornadoes and other upheavals which cause the suffering of vast multitudes of innocent creatures. Or, when men pray, their prayers seem to be unanswered, and they similarly leap to the conclusion that the non-existence of a merciful God is thereby established. The answer is that such evidence, however naturally it may effect our emotions, is far too slight to prove either the existence or the non-existence of God. It would be just as logical to take a stray page which had been torn out of a novel and proceed to construct from it what we supposed to be its plot and moral and the nature of its characters. The evidence is too slight and too far removed from the context. We necessarily regard suffering, the paroxysms of nature, the injustices of life, and the apparent failure of prayer, from one tiny angle. We do not know the context. There may be, if we could see beyond death and behind the immediate causes, an explanation which would entirely harmonise these phenomena with the intelligence of a just God. Those who base their case on such evidence are exactly in the position of a chance visitor from Mars, who, having suddenly alighted on the Sahara Desert, argues that the earth cannot be inhabited by intelligent beings since the whole landscape is a sandy waste: or who, catching a momentary glimpse of a surgical operation, concludes that the hospital is a torture chamber which only exists to minister to a human love of cruelty and murder.

§ 3.

This insufficiency of evidence is indeed our difficulty, and, as we have admitted, appears at first sight to be insurmountable. But there are ways in which the difficulty may be overcome.

The way which I have chosen is elementary. It consists of selecting two fragments of evidence which we have gained through our experience, and of testing whether our reason can draw any conclusions from them. I shall submit that reason is bound to conclude the probability of a God from such evidence. It cannot do more, and, in any case, we must not claim for such evidence more than we claim for the counter-evidence. A moment ago we rejected the popular argument that there was no God, because the evidence on which it is based is necessarily slight: we must remember that the other evidence is equally slight, and cannot do more than point to probabilities. Having drawn that conclusion, we must weigh it against the evidence which points to the improbability of a God, and see how the case is then affected. I shall also submit that the case for the probability of a God is not weakened. If I am successful, I shall then turn to the witness of the consciousness of the human race, and from that I shall attempt to show that the mind of the human race is at least dimly aware of God, and that the claims of theism are justified.

In doing so there is no contradiction of what we have already admitted. If there is a God, we cannot, because of his infinity, understand or be conscious of him more than in a partial manner: we can catch, as it were, only a glimpse of his presence. So far as this realisation must necessarily be vague, there will always remain a certain justification for agnosticism. But the reason for this justification really undermines the value

of the agnostic case, because, as we have already seen, the very nature of God implies the impossibility of the sort of evidence which to a certain type of agnostic would alone carry conviction. God cannot be proved by chemical analysis: our finite minds could not conceive God as he is, if he exists. It is therefore as unreasonable to claim that there is no God because the evidence is insufficient, as if we were to say that, because a mirror does not reflect the whole landscape of Europe, there is therefore no Europe. We can only point to the direction of God and say that this insufficiency is exactly what would arise if God existed.

It must be understood that at this stage I am arguing only from purely primary evidence, and am therefore omitting for the present all considerations of the alleged revelations of God or the claims of authority. We shall reach those considerations later.

§ 4.

First, then, we turn to the evidence of our senses and the court of reason. As I have said, I shall select two fragments only of the possible data.

We observe that the universe is a cosmos—that is to say, it is governed by a system of law. The sun does not suddenly rise in the west or in the middle of the night: on the contrary, so exact is the law, that we can predict the times of sunrise for any number of years ahead. The earth does not fall to pieces owing to the temporary relaxation of the law of gravitation: every creature and inanimate object are placed in an environment and supplied with the necessaries which will enable them to function. Or we may describe this system as a chain of cause and effect. So relatively certain is the chain that where, for example, the fusion of gases causes an unexpected explosion, we do not

suppose that this unpleasant event is due to an irregularity, some whim of chemistry which led them to act differently from the way we had supposed they would act: we set about to discover the cause, and, even if we do not succeed in discovering it, we know that there is a cause and that the reign of law has not been interrupted.

We do not at present know, for instance, more than the immediate causes which produce fine and wet weather. We do not know why cyclonic disturbances sometimes move slowly and sometimes rapidly, or what influences impel them to " fill up " or move away in an unexpected direction. But we are assured that the failures of weather-forecasting are due to our ignorance of the laws of meteorology and *not to the fact that there are no laws*. If the universe were not a cosmos there could be no science, and all human thought would be paralysed.

The favourite argument for theism is that this complete order suggests a design and therefore a designer. And, although much criticism has been raised against this reasoning, I confess that the argument seems to me to remain overwhelmingly convincing. We shall consider later the question whether the design is good and intelligent, or the reverse. But, for the moment, it is only necessary to emphasise that our normal experience shows us that an absence of design is unlikely to produce order. If we throw a pack of cards at random into the air, the chances are more than a million to one that the cards will not fall back on the ground in a complete sequence of suits. Similarly, it appears to be almost incredible that blind and unintelligent forces could have produced the intelligence of the human mind and the intricate model of physical anatomy.

But we can apply this argument further. If the

order of nature is too remote from our personal experience to impress us, we can turn to the kind of influences which might seem to be furthest removed from the reign of exterior (objective) law, and to be subject only to the whim of human will. If there were no God, no intelligent guiding force behind the affairs of the world, one would expect to find these influences, which intimately affect our lives, to be created entirely by the uncertain whim of human will. For instance, if I suffer what is called a "run of bad luck," the non-existence of God would probably imply that such ill-fortune only arose from the action of other people, from the minds of the persons who defrauded me, or from the chief at my office who determined to cut down his staff and their salaries. If, on the other hand, there is a God who intelligently and directly controls the universe, one would expect to find some such order as exists in the chemical or meteorological or botanical spheres: in other words, behind the action and will of these human agents would be an influence which, either completely or partially, controlled and employed those mediums, just as some force or law determines the pace and the direction of a cyclonic disturbance.

Anyone who cares to investigate this path of science cannot fail, I am certain, to discover that even here, in this alleged domain of chance or free will, the same exact system of law is reproduced. I can only record, as the sum of my own elementary investigations, that I am convinced it is easier to forecast the general nature of the influences which at a given period will affect an individual, than to predict whether it will be fine or wet weather next week in England. In this context I cannot do more than record this bare conclusion, but, even so, I mention it because, if it is accurate, it throws a vivid light upon the problem immediately confronting us. It shows us that not

only is there an ordered design in chemical and material conditions, but that the same evidences of design persist in every detail of life—that even our own minute misfortunes and fortunes are the part of a complete scheme. This undoubtedly brings us still nearer to the existence of a God, and so overwhelming is the evidence waiting to be explored that I believe this to be one of the main paths along which, on the intellectual side, man will rediscover God. I am not attempting here to enter upon a consideration of the rival force of free will, the existence of which force I entirely admit. That question will be dealt with later. But I present this conviction, not as proof—since I have not proved it—but rather as an invitation to examination, for those who care to pursue such inquiries.

Let there be no doubt as to the significance of this statement, if it be proved to be true. It means that, whatever the extent of free will, there is a superhuman force controlling and regulating, by ordered law and system, the circumstances and destinies of man. It seems to me completely to destroy the claims of humanitarian atheism, because it denies that there are only blind forces in the universe which the intelligence of man is capable ultimately of controlling. I am not arguing for sheer fatalism, in which I do not believe. I am only recording that sufficient evidence can be obtained, in the realm most intimately affecting human affairs, that there is a scheme so regular and complete as to compel us to admit the existence of a design and a designer of superhuman intelligence.

§ 5.

Secondly, we observe that *nature and creation are arranged as a complete ladder of gradation, rather than on an equality or an irregular basis.* Further than this,

we can say that *all these gradations tend to move towards infinity*.

The simplest analogy, although it is an analogy rather than an example, is to be found in arithmetical numbers. Numbers are all unequal, they mount upwards with entire regularity, and there is no end to them, while even between them are infinite fractions. But the same law applies to properties which are not artificial. There are degrees of heat, of speed, or of size. We find that substances which contain these properties usually contain them in varying degrees, and accordingly themselves stand on various planks of the ladder. Among animals, for example, a hare moves quicker than a tortoise, while light moves more quickly than the fleetest of creatures or the fastest machine which man can devise. Nor are these gradations finite. It is hardly possible to say that any speed is so great that there could be no greater speed, or that any area is so large that it could not be larger.

Among animate objects we find this system of gradation strongly marked. It is the gradation of intelligence, which, as we shall presently see, involves the property of consciousness and the consequent ability to exercise some control over immediate environment. The lower forms of plant show hardly a trace of intelligence; they grow, but do not move. We can trace, however, a regular development of intelligence in the lower forms of animal, and onwards, by a regular sequence, to the animals who reveal an almost human character. In the human kingdom the chain is taken up and extended, from the primitive savage, who is actuated mainly by an animal instinct, to the highest individual intelligences which we know.

The remarkable symptom in this chain is that the

factors which enable the higher types of men to predominate over the lower types are precisely those factors which we see developing in lower forms of animate life and which make, for instance, the animal superior to the plant. It is the power of mind. The white man can conquer the Australian aboriginal because he has knowledge which his mind has been able to acquire, just as the aboriginal is ultimately more powerful than the beast—in spite of greater physical weakness—or the beast than the plant. The gradation of physical strength travels by a different road.

We observe, for instance, that with an increase in the range and power of mind there develops the capacity to love, to admire beauty, and to make an investigation and inquiry as to the causes of surrounding phenomena. We need not trouble to examine the values of the quality which enables an artistic man to appreciate a sunset. For the simple fact is this: *Generally, as we mount the scale, we find an extension of these powers, and not the possession merely of alternative powers.* The man who admires the sunset, in the main, has everything which the animal, who takes no notice of the sunset, possesses. He is higher in the gradation, with all the consequent opportunities of a superior position, precisely because he has a wider range of faculties and consciousness. We are not asked to compare some rival quality which the beast possesses and which a man exchanges for the gift of human love. Except so far as the development of higher qualities modifies the lower forms—as reason, for instance, may modify the cruder physical capacities which some animals possess—the fact remains that man is distinguishable from the animal because he possesses more, and not because he possesses different, capacities. In other words,

the system is one of gradations and not of parallel lines.

The conclusion which can alone be drawn from this evidence is obvious. So far as these facts are concerned, they point to the probability of a God who has designed and who controls the order. And, inasmuch as the gradation of intelligence is seen mounting from the vegetable to the philosopher, and all gradations appear to tend to infinity, we are moving, not towards the inanimate infinity of the pantheist, but towards a God who is a supreme intelligence, who differs from man, not only in kind but in infinite degree, as man differs from the plant. Reason cannot give us a more definite answer. We can only say that, in view of the order and apparent design, and inasmuch as the gradation of intelligence mounts through creation and should lead to infinity like the other gradations, it is probable that there is an intelligent God: it is more probable than the alternative theory that unintelligence and chance created intelligence, and that the gradation of intelligence comes to an abrupt end in man.

There are two counter-considerations which may be raised in answer to this, before we come to weigh the main evidence which appears to suggest that there is no God. The first is that, if the principle of grades is to be accepted as probable, there must be grades of beings greater than man, but sufficiently near for him to be aware of them. If man is not the final word of evolution, and there are angels, why is not man as conscious of the angels as the dog is conscious of man? It is reasonable that man should not be directly conscious of God. But there must be, on the gradation theory, intermediate beings, the lower ranks of whom should be physically visible to, or at least in sensible contact with, human beings.

This difficulty, however, is not sufficient of itself to

unseat the argument. For we see in the gradations beneath us gaps between the kingdoms which the consciousness of the lower creatures does not seem able to bridge. A plant, though in its own sphere it betrays symptoms of consciousness, is unaware of the animal. All the evidence equally goes to show that the insect is only conscious of man as an unknown force which brings death and violence upon it: the consciousness of the fly or ant, for instance, moves in so different a sphere from human activity, that there can be no communication between the two. And, correspondingly, if there are beings superior to man, they may be equally far removed from man. They may possess no physical properties by which we can come into contact with them. Certainly there are factors in our own existence which seem to point to superior influences over which we have no control, influences which, though they operate through physical agencies, such as the tornado or the earthquake, may work behind those agencies.

The second consideration is one which has captured the imagination of several modern thinkers and has been popularised by Mr. H. G. Wells in *God the Invisible King*. It is the theory that God is at present undeveloped, that he is merely in the vanguard of evolution, leading man on to the conquest of the forces of the universe. But the difficulties which surround this suggestion are just as great as the difficulties of evidence for an infinite God. It leaves unexplained the causes which produced the forces which are still greater than God. And it ignores the reasonable deduction that there is a gradation of intelligence which leads to infinite intelligence, while it introduces the more serious objection that, if this infinite intelligence is not yet in existence, time is not a human limitation but an eternal condition. God is to be

omnipotent only in the future, and, by adding to his powers in the course of years, he is subject to time. This is a contradiction of most of the enlightened modern philosophies: for we are beginning to recognise that time is a dimension to which it is highly improbable the objective universe is subject.

§ 6.

We can now pass to the consideration of such evidence as seems to counterbalance the probability of our previous conclusion.

The first and most popular objection is that, if there is a control and design of the universe, it is an unintelligent or malicious control. Nature is apparently red in tooth and claw: there is a continual warfare between the species of plant and animal, involving cruelty and intense suffering. Insects have been created which only serve to cause the discomfort of animals, and beneath the apparent surface of beauty there is conflict and agony and death. An intelligent God, it is said, would not have designed this waste and destruction.

Or, sometimes, the objection appears in the form of asking why God permits such wars as that which recently caused the slaughter of millions of Europeans, or the havoc of an earthquake, or the hideous suffering which men endure through disease and the contest for survival. Men who have prayed to God for release from individual misery have found their prayers unanswered: innocent children have died in torture, while evil men have frequently escaped these terrible influences. There is no doubt that at the present moment the widespread disbelief in religion is largely due to this class of experience. Viewed from such an aspect, nothing seems more certain than that the

universe is a blind force grinding down whatever victims cross a particular path, and entirely remote from the love and far-seeing Providence which we associate with the properties of intelligence and goodness.

Perhaps it is a realisation of this aspect of nature which has encouraged Mr. Bertrand Russell to adopt his ultra-pessimistic standpoint. "That man," he writes, "is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving: that his origin, his growth, his hopes and his fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms: that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual beyond the grave: that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction on the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand."

The instinctive protest which is called forth in the minds of most people by this appalling and crude destructivism constitutes, of course, no answer to the charge. But the real weakness of the whole of the criticism which we are considering is that, as we have already seen, it is necessarily based on an aspect, on a single aspect, of nature. It relies wholly upon our view of nature—namely, upon our limited human experience, and therefore it is almost certain to be incomplete and inaccurate. We shall continually meet with the fact that the smaller explanations—the explanations, that is to say, which take in one set of facts but are not balanced by opposing facts—are

much less likely to be true than the wider application. Truth is made up of opposites. We shall meet this principle later. But, for the moment, we need only emphasise that the whole of this criticism rests on the view which our experience gives us from one side of the curtain. It is limited to our experience.

Now our previous conclusion is not limited to our experience. Indeed, this criticism shows that it is opposed by at least a large amount of our experience. It is based, not on our immediate physical contact with the influences which play upon us, but on the much wider range of intellectual deduction from our observation. The man who says, "There cannot be a God, or he would not allow hawks to prey on other birds," is arguing from a narrower range than the man who says: "There is probably a God, because I see in creation a steady development of intelligent consciousness, and therefore I argue that there is no halt in this development until we reach infinite intelligence."

Moreover, the second theory is a wider explanation, because it contains the evidence of the cruelty of nature and the apparent non-presence of God. It is bound to contain it, because it cannot ignore it. And we then discover that the narrower view, which draws its conclusion direct from physical experience, is not unanswerable. There are several explanations which might account for it. For example, a certain amount of suffering in the universe is caused by man's free action—it is due to human creation. As we are dealing at a later stage with the problem of free will, we must ignore, for the moment, the theory which denies its existence. It is quite sufficient to admit that man is free, within a certain scope, to do as he pleases, and that, if there is a God, he has allowed this free action.

It is impossible for us to assume that this divine permission is a proof of God's unintelligence or maliciousness, since we could not fully know the reasons for which he allowed man free will. The reasons might satisfy us as perfectly good if we knew them. We can only say that man has free will, and that some of the suffering in the world is due to the wide freedom which this entails. If we complain that it is unjust that the consequences should fall on those who are not individually responsible, that men should be tortured and slaughtered because of the greed of kings and the foolishness of statesmen, we are again limiting ourselves to an individualistic conception of humanity. Whatever may be our predilections, the human race is a corporate unit, whole races are affected by single action, and the sins of the forefathers fall upon the children. Equally, men are free to cause immense havoc and evil. These things are as certain as any facts we observe, but they do not necessarily disprove the intelligence or the goodness of a God who allows them.

Suppose, for example, that the plant possesses a degree of conscious intelligence and is aware that man directly affects, on occasions, its welfare. A man digs up a cabbage and cooks it, to provide food for himself and his family. The cabbage, arguing only from its individual interests, says: "Man must be a cruel monster, he is wilfully taking away my life." But we know that the cause of the upheaval is a wider one, that the uprooting of the cabbage, in fact, is effected in order that it may fulfil the desirable function of nourishing the man and enabling him to perform his own wider functions. The analogy is relatively sound. We are in the position of the cabbage. We do not know why death and pain are caused: but, seeing what has happened in the case of the cabbage,

we are justified in assuming that creation interacts upon creation and God upon creation, and that what we consider to be unjust and cruel may be unjust and cruel only because of the limited view we are taking. Actually, the suffering may fulfil a larger and desirable purpose. The cabbage is wrong in looking at the act only from the standpoint of itself. Man may equally be wrong in looking at such acts from the standpoints of his own interests, in so far as his interests are probably interwoven with the interests of the whole, which interests it is necessary and right that he should fulfil.

A large balance of evil and suffering, however, exists beyond the reach of human action, and cannot, therefore, be laid to its charge. Why are the elements allowed to cause pain and misery, and why are the animals cruel and ferocious in character? If we fully admit the free play of human action there seems to be no reason why we should not admit that there is also a free action of subhuman and elemental forces —a will-power probably of a "group" or collective nature. The universe is a system of law, but, within the law, creatures and elements are allowed to act and react without any deliberate prohibition by God. The further down we probe in the gradation of intelligence, the more crude and unintelligent we may expect to find the forces at work.

§ 7.

The second difficulty is of a more technical character. It arises from an impatience with those definitions and explanations of God which the human mind has attempted. But this difficulty need not long detain us, because to some extent we have already anticipated it. All human definitions of God must necessarily

be incomplete and therefore inaccurate, and we have only to remember that there is a distinction between what is incomplete and what is wholly erroneous. Our impression of the physical universe is limited and vague, but, so far as it goes, it may be fundamentally correct. Indeed, this class of objection is really tilting against a ninepin, since it is a criticism of the admitted inadequacy of our conception of God, and not a criticism of the God whom we attempt to conceive. Merely to attack and criticise these definitions does not affect, one way or the other, that which they attempt to define. To object to the human idea of God does not disprove God.

The concrete form which this criticism takes is an objection to the doctrine of a personal God. It complains of such a prayer as the *Pater noster*, and asks how the Infinite Deity can be addressed as, "Our Father who art in Heaven," or asked to "lead us not into temptation." We can only repeat that to translate into human language a definition of God is inadequate, but is not necessarily false. It is no more false in principle than the attempt of an artist to reproduce on canvas a portrait, or the study of some natural landscape. All human reproduction is a translation, the impression of a glimpse of reality. The more complete the reality, the more we must expect to find that any interpretation of it is imperfect.

This may be a convenient opportunity for considering the difficulty which is raised by many people at the present time in regard to prayer, even though such a consideration necessarily anticipates and assumes the existence of God. People sometimes say: "Why should it be necessary to pray? How can an omnipotent God be swayed by petitions? If the universe is a system of law and order, can it possibly be supposed that God will be induced to dislocate this

law by being asked to avert catastrophe, or to grant that something may happen which would not happen if prayer was not offered ?"

The question is reasonable, and it is difficult to answer, because there are so many answers. Perhaps the chief answer is that intercessory prayer, which is not the main object of religion, is itself a force which has its part in the forces of God's universe. If we allow for the consequences of human free will and the power of human thought—if we admit, that is to say, that these influences have their effect on the laws which govern the universe because they are themselves laws—there can be no doubt that prayer, which is a form of thought and will, must also have an effect. To speak of God being swayed by human petitions is precisely to use that kind of inadequate language which is itself the object of complaint. God could not be a weak personality who changes his plans if men exert sufficient pressure. We must rather envisage a God who is a Person, in so far as he is an infinite intelligence as opposed to a collection of blind forces, possessing love and justice to a degree which is necessarily incomprehensible to us, and who allows in his creation, not only for the play of natural law and consequence, but for the forces which men are able to create by their prayers, their thought, and their will.

The primary object of religion, and indeed of prayer, however, is to bring the individual into closer contact with the Infinite Deity. If God is the supreme intelligence, the inclination and the need of man to draw closer and to speak, in his own way, to this Source of all things, is natural and desirable. The instinct which prompts a man to reverence what is beautiful in nature is the same instinct which prompts him to worship. Anything which seems to be comparatively great or infinite in character compels man's admiration.

What is more natural, therefore, than that he should worship that which he conceives to be the Infinity of intelligence and love? Ideally, prayer should be an attitude much more than a concrete petition.

§ 8.

We have considered the leading evidence of reason, and we see that the reasons for believing in the existence of God are stronger than the reasons for believing in his non-existence. The balance of probability is on the side of theism. More than that we cannot expect reason to show.

But we can now turn to the evidence of a further faculty. I shall have occasion repeatedly to confess my belief that ultimate authority, in almost all questions, lies in the consciousness.* It lies in the individual consciousness for many reasons. In the first place, before I draw any conclusions, or bear any evidence, or think at all, I must exist in order to be able to do so. The reality of my own existence rests entirely on my own consciousness: reason cannot prove it, external authority cannot prove it. The basis, therefore, of all thought, the primary assumption which we must make, if thought is not to be paralysed, is a fact which rests only on the authority of our consciousness. If, in this, our consciousness is wrong, all else is wrong. It is this which we imply when we say that all knowledge is *relative* rather than *absolute*. It is dependent on our own existence and the reliability of our consciousness. It reaches us only through the medium of ourselves.

Even where we acquire relative knowledge exclusively by our reason, or by our physical senses, the

* Henceforward, for the sake of brevity, I am using the term 'consciousness,' unless otherwise stated, to mean what I have claimed to be the distinct faculty of intuitive consciousness.

faculty of our consciousness almost invariably acts as an ultimate judge. When we see a man cross the road, or when we add up a row of figures, an element of consciousness confirms the result: if we added up a row of figures unconsciously we should have no conviction that we had obtained the right result, although the unconscious mind is usually accurate. The exception, as we saw in chapter one, is where we absolutely accept the assertion of external authority. I accept entirely the statement of science that the planet Mercury is nearer the sun than is the earth. I have never studied the calculations and I have no personal conviction that the statement is true. I accept it because I have faith in the authority, because, so far as I know, no rival authority makes a counter-assertion, and also because I am not sufficiently concerned with the accuracy of the statement to feel any particular inclination to consider the evidence for myself.

Therefore, but for such statements of external authority as we accept, our individual consciousness takes an active and an ultimate share in all that we believe or (relatively) know. And behind this we are forced to rely on it absolutely for the basis of all thought, belief and knowledge.

In the first chapter we saw that *confirmation*—the witness, that is to say, of similar conclusions separately reached—is an element which comparatively strengthens belief. Where, therefore, we find the voice of *corporate consciousness*—the evidence, that is, of a large number of other people arriving at a similar result—we are bound to recognise an authority of extreme importance. We are justified, accordingly, in turning from our individual reason to see what the corporate consciousness of mankind has to say regarding the existence of God.

We are at once faced with the fact that an over-

whelming majority of mankind has accepted some species of religion, and, when we turn to examine the witness of the various religions, we cannot fail to be impressed by the remarkable unanimity with which they insist on the existence of deity. They differ in definition and interpretation, as we should expect. In the more primitive forms God is a tribal deity, possessed of the human attributes of anger, jealousy, vengeance, and a lust for war. In polytheism the various aspects of God are separated into distinct deities. In Mohammedanism Allah expresses what is, so far as we can judge by human standards, a nobler idea. In Buddhism we are lost in a more abstract conception, in which the absolute nature of God is so emphasised as to override all attempts to appreciate his Fatherhood or "Person." But all religions, in common with Christianity, accept the primary principle of deity and omnipotent deity. I confess, indeed, to an inability to imagine that any student of comparative religion can fail to be impressed by the remarkable unanimity of religion on this point. The immense variety of the interpretations and conceptions of God are natural and inevitable, when we remember that all such definitions must come through the medium of human language and expression, an expression which varies according to the stage of development which the personnel of the religious bodies have reached.

§ 9.

Against this testimony there are various objections raised. We may classify them under three heads.

The first is that the *teaching* of a religion is no proof that there has been a *corporate consciousness* that the teaching is true. Men, it is said, have been too ignorant to criticise or reject the authoritative dogma

with which they have been inoculated. Men have had religious teaching thrust upon them at the point of the sword, or have grown up in an unquestioning tradition. There has been no element of conscious acceptance.

To a certain extent this criticism is true, but fundamentally it is obviously false. It is obviously false because, in the course of ages, the experience of history shows that no religious teaching can survive which does not receive the conscious assent of its adherents. Eventually a doctrine which has failed to obtain any confirmation of human consciousness collapses because it possesses no foundations. In other words, all religions, and indeed all systems of belief, continue because they are not merely an authority which is forced on their adherents, but because they are, in themselves, a process of conscious assent by the adherents. For a time a minority could, no doubt, insist on a majority accepting what they did not believe, but so artificial a system could not continue: eventually disbelief would overthrow the minority. The assent may have little value, because the community may be so primitive that its power of consciousness is little developed: but there must be some assent to tolerate and propagate the tradition. When, therefore, we see that a belief in God, however that belief is defined, and for whatever reasons individual men may originally have accepted it, has continuously survived, we are bound, I submit, to conclude that there has been the element of corporate consciousness to account for it.

The second objection is that this corporate consciousness is not confirmatory—that is to say, it has sprung from a common cause. According to many anti-theists, the idea of God originated in the ape's fear of thunder: he heard thunder, and, when (*sic*) he had developed into man, he attributed the sound to

supernatural causes. All religious belief, this theory alleges, is due to the childlike nature of primitive man. Children imagine that there are fairies in the wood and goblins in the darkness: all unexplained phenomena are attributed to spiritual or supernatural agency. When children grow up they discover that there are no fairies or goblins, and much of the unexplained phenomena is found to be due to perfectly natural causes. Belief in God is due to this common superstition, and, correspondingly, as they individually become more intelligent, men unshackle themselves from the bondage of theistic doctrine. At the present time an increasing number of men have no belief in a deity.

We will consider the latter half of this claim—viz., that there is an increasing non-belief in God, under the third class of objection. We are concerned, therefore, at the moment, only with the theory that there is no confirmatory value in the consciousness of the various religions because, primarily, they spring from a common human tradition or instinct.*

Whatever theory of the origin of man we accept, we shall agree that man has at least a common source—that is to say, that the first man or men probably formed a community in some one area. We can admit, therefore, in general, the theory of a common tradition. But, even if we further admit the evolutionary claim that the first men began to believe in God because of their tendency to explain thunder and other unknown phenomena as due to God, we are no nearer to proving the error of their belief. It is merely, according to theistic teaching, a crude impression of the truth. If there is a God, thunder is obviously his voice, for natural causes are merely the mediums of his activity.

* It is important to notice that in primitive natures instinct is the faculty from which consciousness evolves.

There is nothing contradictory in admitting that an idea is superstition, and yet perceiving in the superstition a dim consciousness of reality. Once again it is the human definition of the reality which is inadequate, and not the reality which is disproved: it is the definition that God has a physical voice which is the superstition, and not that the conception that the activity of nature is an expression of his presence. But, further than this, we must turn to the evidence of the religious consciousness of God in later times when man had begun to separate into races, and continents, far removed from one another, had commenced to be inhabited. In other words, the varieties of the religious interpretations of God now become the witness for theism. Not only the unanimity of the fundamental idea, but the contrary evidence of the differing degrees of interpretation, come into court against this theory. The remarkable fact is that, though human races grew up with traditions so different, and under conditions so distinct that they accepted various religious conceptions, they nevertheless preserved in common the fundamental belief. Had there been but one religion there would, in fact, be no confirmation. The confirmation lies in the variety of religions, and the consequent proof that religious consciousness developed along separate paths, and yet arrived at a similar conclusion.

The final objection is that, even though there still survives a corporate consciousness of God, there is equally, and perhaps increasingly, a corporate *unconsciousness* of God. Why are many intelligent men entirely unconvinced and unaware of God? Again, the difficulty lies in the many answers to this question. The first is that consciousness is an *active* rather than a passive faculty, in the sense that, though it may be likened to a mirror which reflects an objective truth,

it requires the activity of man to keep it clear from obstructive influences.

Once the energy of an individual is absorbed in other directions, the energy of keeping this mirror clear and operative is correspondingly weakened. And when we speak of an age of intelligence, we mean usually an age in which the reason is the faculty which is exclusively developed and employed. Our immediate civilisation is primarily a mechanical civilisation. Man's energies are concentrated in material directions, in scientific research, in social and industrial reform. The consciousness, certainly, of what for the moment we will assume to be spiritual reality, and the intuitive sense, tend accordingly to be neglected. That, indeed, seems to be the tendency of all civilisations which have reached a certain level of material development.

Few men to-day are contemplative. And it is obviously improbable that, if their intellect is otherwise absorbed, a consciousness of God will be forced upon them. Occasionally, in what we call "revelation," this may happen. But normally we can only expect the human consciousness to reflect God if men make active use of that faculty. A man who is completely absorbed in mathematical calculations may be quite unconscious even of so intimate a truth as that a woman has fallen in love with him: only if he were less preoccupied would he be aware of this fact. Exactly the same results occur in telepathic phenomena, where, if the mind of the intended recipient is vigorously concerned with other interests, the telepathic message will not be communicated. It is a necessary condition in all "thought-reading" experiments that the subject shall, as far as possible, make his mind a blank. Such an experiment would almost certainly fail if, on the contrary, his mental energies

were at the moment intent upon the solution of some business or domestic problem.

Social intellect at the present time seems to me to tend very much to this position. The community in general is too preoccupied to be conscious of God. A surer witness as to the modern consciousness of God must be found among those who are mystics, or whose temperament is at least concerned with some form of contemplative meditation. And here we encounter a very significant fact: the consciousness of all mystics, Eastern, Western, Christian and non-Christian, is amazingly similar. Although we cannot here embark upon an inquiry as to the reliability of mysticism, we must at least take this fact into account: for the claim that mystical experiences are delusions and attributable to suggestion is decidedly weakened by their unanimity.

I confess my deliberate belief to be that no one can enter upon a meditative course without becoming conscious to some extent of the divine existence. I am quite sure, for example, that if any man tried the experiment of going into retreat, or of undergoing such an amazing experience as regular attendance at the Catholic rites of Holy Week, provided he had previously cleared his mind, as far as possible, of prejudice and presupposition, it would be impossible for him to emerge without some conscious conviction of the reality of God. And I regard the confirmation of such experiences, under widely differing conditions, as strong evidence that such consciousness is not delusion. I am not impressed by the counter-evidence: for, if men do not undertake such experiments, it is not unnatural that no impression of God should communicate itself to them.

The objection that such experiences are self-created delusions or mere "auto-suggestion" can only be based on the claim that the faculty of consciousness

is itself unreliable. We shall refer to this in a later context. But, at the moment, it is sufficient to declare that delusions can be quite definitely distinguished from genuine consciousness by a series of tests, and that such consciousness of God as we have described unmistakably belongs to the genuine consciousness, to the reflection, that is, of a reality which is entirely objective to ourselves.

There remain, however, a certain number of cases where individual men have used their consciousness to search for God and have not found him. They have reached out their hands and they have touched only the void. The explanation for this must lie in the individual personality: there may be mental or functional causes which intervene. Such cases can only be considered separately, and they are in any event too few and irregular to counterbalance the experience of similar endeavours.

§ 10.

We have now, in an admittedly bare outline, considered the evidence of human reason and consciousness. Reason, we have seen, inclines in favour of the belief in God, and the human corporate consciousness of God confirms this conclusion. The objections are not sufficiently strong to destroy that conclusion, and to state this is to put the case for theism at its very lowest. For, beyond all that has yet been said, there remains a further consideration. We have assumed, so as to allow the adversary the strongest possible ground for his argument, that he is right when he claims that, in modern times, there are an increasing number of people who are unconscious of God. What, however, we have also to remember is that there is a corresponding development of corporate conscious-

ness of God among the minority, in the sense that the average level of religious belief has been raised. No one can deny that the corporate assent of the various religious communities to their religions is a more intelligent and enlightened assent than was the case a hundred or three hundred years ago. In other words, the belief in God has shown that it can exist and thrive in a more educated environment. And this appears to me sufficiently to answer the claim that belief in God is rooted in superstition and must decay as superstition gives way to intelligence. If that claim were true, religious belief would dissolve before the spread of general education as the mist in the valleys is driven back when the sun mounts the heavens. But, instead of this, we find that, whatever the respective numerical proportions of believers and unbelievers, the spread of education and diffusion of knowledge is so congenial to religion that it is able to adapt itself to these conditions, and to strengthen its appeal as a result of these influences.

CHAPTER THREE

The revelation of God

§ 1.

WE have agreed that because our knowledge and consciousness is inevitably inadequate it is not necessarily erroneous. We can know in part and extend this limited knowledge, just as we increase our knowledge of the universe though we possess only a fragment of information concerning it. There is no contradiction between admitting that we cannot imagine God as he is, and yet claiming that we are dimly aware of some of his attributes.

One such attribute, indeed, is so evident that most religions have in some form attempted to express it by definition. We shall appreciate this attribute more easily if we turn again to the faculty of consciousness and ask ourselves of what it is composed. When I say I am conscious of an object, I immediately, and quite inevitably, introduce three aspects or elements: there is, first, myself, the subject who is conscious; secondly, the object of which I am conscious; and, thirdly, the act or spirit of consciousness which unites the subject and object in one act. These three elements must be present, else there can be no process of consciousness. When the object is isolated from the subject, as frequently happens, it means that I am unconscious of it. Similarly, there must be an object which my consciousness reflects. The third element is equally distinct, for a verb expresses an actual function: I may stand facing the reflection of a sunset and yet be unaware of

its existence or its beauty. And, therefore, if any one of these three elements is absent, the particular act of consciousness is unfulfilled.

In such a case as we have taken, the object is outside myself. I am conscious of the green leaves on a tree, and the green leaves are clearly not part of myself. But in self-consciousness all three elements are included within what we describe as the individuality. When I say that I am conscious that I exist, these elements—that which is conscious, that of which I am conscious, and the sense or spirit of consciousness are inseparable aspects of myself, and any attempt to distinguish them to the point of separation only leads to confusion.

If God is infinite and omnipresent he is supremely self-conscious. And Christian doctrine is accordingly expressing a quite inevitable fact when it says that God is a Trinity in unity. The subject or source of consciousness may be illustrated in God the Father, the object or reflection or manifestation of his consciousness in God the Son, and the spirit of consciousness in God the Holy Spirit. And yet these three are the indivisible unity of himself, since he contains all things. Once again we have to confess that language is unable to convey an exact description of this truth, and, indeed, we shall quickly find ourselves in difficult waters if we endeavour to analyse the definition too closely. But the truth which it conveys remains an inevitable conclusion: it can only be denied if we are prepared to say that when we are conscious of green leaves, we can dispense with the leaves, with ourselves, or with the conscious action; or that there is some fourth element. Consciousness is a trinity, and self-consciousness is trinity in unity.

§ 2.

In these mysteries which lie so largely outside the scope of our understanding we must proceed carefully, lest in the use of language we create, not simply an inadequate, but an actually false conception.

We turn now to the question as to whether God has made any revelation of himself to man, and, again remembering that reason can merely show whether this is probable, and not whether it is certain, we consider the evidence.

The first evidence is that the universe is so apparently interrelated that the contact of God with man in some form is likely. We are regarding God, for the moment, as transcendent to—outside—his own creation, though this is an incomplete conception if God is infinite: but it is necessary at this stage of our inquiry, and it need not lead us astray if presently we apply the opposite conception of his immanence, or omnipresence, within his creation.

The universe is not made up of watertight compartments. Man moves on a different sphere from, but he is in continual relationship to, the plant. If, once again, we can think of the plant as having conscious understanding, it will be aware of some revelation of man's existence from its own experience, of some being which has plucked its fruit and has even bodily removed it to another soil. The functions of man and the functions of the plant tend to meet and to combine, or, if we take what we have seen to be the more limited view, to conflict.

We then inquire as to the form which such a revelation would probably take. In our cautious investigation along the road of reason, we may perhaps presume that it would be the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, the object or manifestation or Logos,

which would be the aspect of God revealed: for revelation is a form of manifestation. And at once we meet with two possible theories, either that this revelation of God is to be found perpetually in his physical creation; or that it has occurred, or will occur in concentrated form, in a single event in time, an incarnation subject to the limitations of place. At first sight the second theory would appear to be impossible, since the Infinite God, we should say, cannot be comprised in finite form without fundamental contradiction. But, on closer examination, we find that there are several considerations which modify that conclusion.

In the first place, any direct manifestation of God in the physical universe, of infinity in time and space, is itself a limitation, and if the concentrated form is a contradiction, it is no less a contradiction if the concentration is more widely diffused. Secondly, there need be no alternative between the two theories: both may occur. God may be continually manifest in his own creation, which seems to be the conception to which pantheism has limited itself: and there may also be the still more concentrated manifestation of God in the incarnate form of an individual man.

Thirdly, the concentration is not necessarily a contradiction of infinity. It would be a contradiction if it were claimed that God the Son ceased to exist in any way elsewhere during the period of his human incarnation. Theology has not committed itself to such a theory. We can turn only to the imperfect medium of analogies. Not without reason has one of the Christian symbols taken the form of an inverted triangle: it enshrines the mystery of God focussing himself, reflecting himself, as it were, in an apex at a particular point. The apex is not separated from the rest of the triangle: it comes in an unbroken

line from the base and marks the point of concentrated focus.

Where, if such a point occurred, would it lead? Where would such a concentrated manifestation in the physical universe take place? Here we are on a peculiarly debatable ground, and we must carefully recall the fact that we can claim by the powers of reason only to show whether the Christian doctrine is possible or probable, and not to prove its certainty. On this principle we can say that a *human* incarnation would be probable, because man appears to be the most conscious unit in that physical universe. The subhuman creatures are obviously less consciously intelligent, and any creation superior to man seems, as we have already agreed, to belong to a non-physical sphere. The animal is physically aware of the human being, but the human being is not physically aware of any being superior to himself. He stands, therefore, on the physical level, in a unique position.

There is another reason why we should expect to find a human incarnation of God. But that we must consider when we deal with the theory of an atonement.

The further argument in favour of the probability of a manifestation of God in physical form is that evidently all physical manifestation is closely connected with activity on other levels. We can best appreciate this fact when we realise that much human action on the physical level, for example, is the result of thought: or, conversely, that powerful thought is almost certain to manifest itself in action. When nations think war, war is likely to occur. When a mother loves her child, she ultimately embraces it. All thought apparently tends to manifest itself in action. The physical level is a reflection of activity on " super-physical " levels.

It is this fact which the mythical school of thinkers seems completely to have ignored. They point to the

common religious tradition that God is born of a pure Virgin and is sacrificed for the sins of the world. They refer to the astrological significance of the seasons of Christmas and Passiontide, and they declare that, though the eternal truths which are thereby symbolised are real, it is an error to suppose that there is any reality in the alleged historical events. To say this is to ignore the fact that mental activity tends almost inevitably to reflect itself in physical activity, and that therefore anything which we can describe as supermental or "spiritual" activity probably percolates in a similar manner down to the sphere of time and place and physical action. This mythical criticism is, in effect, a denial that because the mother loves the child she will ever embrace the child: it admits the reality of the love, but it says that, because it is real, there never occurred a physical act of love. As we shall see, the historical claims of Christianity, like the physical acts, are reflections of eternal spiritual truths: and they are probable, and not improbable, because they are reflections.

§ 3.

We can now ask what features or incidents such a divine incarnation would have possessed. And, for our purpose, we can group them under three heads.

The first concerns a law which appears to be a fundamental law in nature, and which we shall meet with in many forms. We may call it the law of *polarity*. It is the law that before anything can be complete it must possess at least two opposites or poles which combine together. We meet with this law, for example, in the positives and negatives of electricity. For the moment we need only apply it to the conditions of sex in the animal world, where male

and female are the opposites which normally combine to achieve procreation.

Physically the male is the active and the female the receptive-pole in sex. If, therefore, the divine incarnation is a direct reflection of a spiritual activity, the female or receptive side of the co-union would be human. The descent of this divine outpouring into human form would be essentially the active or male force in the world of sex. Indeed, if we accept at all the reality of this form of manifestation of God, we are inevitably, I think, led to conclude that there could be no human father. This will sound at first to be an unwarrantable conclusion, so improbable that it suggests false reasoning. But it is unwarrantable only if we separate the Virgin Birth from its complete context. We shall continually find that isolated Christian doctrines seem to be impossible. They are impossible when we regard them separately.

And it is so in this case. For, consider the context. We agree that if a historical and concentrated manifestation of God occurred, it would be on the human level. We further agree that it would be the reflection of a reality which exists far beyond the confines of time and physical conditions. It would stand in relation to this spiritual reality as the embrace of a mother stands to the love which that embrace expresses. Therefore, the positive or masculine side of this historical event would be the spiritual force which poured out and reflected itself in the manifestation. Reason cannot prove that there would be no masculine human agent, but it can show that the absence of a human father would be probable. If we expected to find that this Incarnation was a normal human incarnation, it means that we fail to appreciate the directness and intensity of relation between the eternal manifestation of God and this concentrated historical incarnation. There

can be no complete analogy to an admittedly unique event, but we can observe the conclusion to be drawn even from incomplete examples. If a room is naturally dark, it is necessary to emphasise such light as there is, by building the largest possible window and hanging up a mirror to reflect the light from the one angle whence it comes. It may be necessary to supplement artificial light. But where the sunlight is strong and there is open access to the room, there is no need for such apparatus. If a man's sight is good, he does not need glasses. If a person is inspired with an intense emotion towards us, such as love, or hate, or fear, there is no need for him to employ the medium of words to explain his sentiments: his emotion is so strong that, though it will tend to action, it could express itself without a vehicle. In fact, it is always the case that a medium only becomes essential where the force is too remote to be independent. If such a force of divine outpouring as the Incarnation occurred, it must, of its very nature, have needed no human agent on the active or male side. It would need the female or passive factor because the human race was to receive it. If the rain pours down in sufficient quantity, there is no need for the hose: but the garden itself, the flowers, or soil, or whatever is to be the recipient, must be there itself to receive.

None of these considerations prove that there was a Virgin Birth. They prove only that when many of the great religions bear witness to this tradition, they are bearing witness to something which is probable, and, indeed, which we should anticipate. It is easy to suggest alternative methods by which the Incarnation could have been expressed. God might have appeared in human form without any human parentage. We can only reply that then he would not have entered the gate of birth, and his Incarnation would have been

less direct and still less in conformity with natural law: there is no contradiction of law in the Virgin Birth, if we admit that a positive force may be so strong as to create independently of procreation. Or it may be asked why there should be a solitary historical incident, why God should not continually, or, at any rate, more than once become incarnate. To this we must reply that Christianity, at least, does not insist that there can only be a single historical Incarnation. It is concerned only with the humanity of this earth, and it makes no statement as to whether incarnations have ever taken place among other beings in other possibly inhabited planets.

But it is true that the tendency of any manifestation in the sphere of history or action is in distinct and isolated form. The kiss by which a mother expresses her love for her child is a single act: it may be repeated, but then it is a fresh act. This is so merely because on the human level all action and event is strictly controlled by time: it begins and ends. If the Incarnate God had not been born and had not died, he could not have been truly incarnate: he would not have been man. If he had been born by the operation of a human father, he could not be God.

§ 4.

The second characteristic which we should look for in any divine incarnation is what we may call the miraculous element. We do not mean by that a magical power—the dislocation of law, that is to say, by arbitrary whim. But, if God became man, it would inevitably follow, because of law, and not in defiance of law, that he would exercise in his contact with the human sphere powers which were superhuman.

When a man comes into contact with the plant or animal world, he exercises powers which are super-plantlike and super-animal. It may be said that the analogy is not true because man does not become a plant. But in divine incarnation it is claimed that God retains his divine powers, though limited by human form. And therefore it is not inadmissible to test the probable effect of divine power on human circumstances by observing the effect of human power on plant circumstances.

What, from the plant standpoint, does a man do when he applies himself to the plant world? He removes the plant bodily to another soil. He commands the drought, for he can lay on the hose and refresh the drooping plant with water. He cuts away from it decayed and diseased leaves. He protects it from birds and caterpillars. He revives it by special care when it is at the point of death. All these are things which the plant could not do of itself. No other plant could do such things. If the plant could see the man, it would see him moving, walking about, running—acts which are entirely beyond the capacity of the plant. Comparatively, therefore, the contact of man with the plant world must inevitably introduce the miraculous element.

It is strange that the modernists, who have sought to make Christ more credible to the human mind, should have embarked on their task by disowning the miraculous features of his history. For, if they succeeded in their disavowals, the only effect could be to make the history of Christ incredible—incredible, that is, if he is more than human. If it is admitted that he is not divine, and that no incarnation of the deity is conceivable, then it remains equally improbable that there is any interplay of God on human affairs: for if the historical miracles, which are merely the exercise

of the divine powers of Christ, are the stumbling-block, as the modernists allege, then all the miracles, which are also the exercise of divine power, are a stumbling-block. Are there no miracles to-day as evidence of a superhuman and divine activity? Is not the sunrise and the tornado and the creation of the solar system an activity which is as entirely beyond the powers and experience and the imagination of man as healing the lepers and walking on the sea and raising the dead and multiplying the loaves and fishes?

There is an answer to this argument. It is said that all such superhuman activity is regular and proceeds by law. The plant, indeed, if it possessed a memory, would be aware of continual manifestations of the super-vegetable powers of the many human beings who have entered the garden. But with some of the Christian miracles events are alleged to have happened which never happened before and have never happened since, and appear to be the dislocation, and even the contradiction, of the laws we know to exist. When Lazarus died, and decomposition had actually set in, how could life have been restored? How could five loaves be made to feed a multitude? How could Christ himself have risen from the dead after his crucifixion? There is no analogy between this and the uprooting of the plant by man, which, if only the plant possessed a memory, it would remember frequently to have occurred.

But the analogy is false, for if the physical incarnation of God only once occurred, then this more intimate interplay of divine over human powers was unique. We must assume the case, therefore, of a plant which only for a single period is brought in contact with an individual man. To deny that there could be laws so powerful as to override the laws of which we are aware, is precisely as if the plant argued that there can

be no such energy as motion because it had never been made aware of such an energy. There is no escape ultimately from this conclusion, for, to the plant, motion, or the uprooting and replanting of a shrub in a new soil is quite as violent a challenge to the regular order as walking upon the sea, or raising the dead. We must be careful to remind ourselves in this apologia that by protesting that the miracles are possible and probable, we are not attempting to prove their existence. Among the many religions of the world there must be many stories of miracles which are the result of pious or fearful human imagination. All we can say is, that no divine incarnation can have occurred without producing the miraculous element.

The modernist tendency is to reduce religious claims to the terms of our own experience. And that at once stamps it as unbelievable. For we know, at least, this—that the objective facts of life invariably lie outside such a narrow confine. When I first went to the opera I found it to be entirely beyond the boundaries of anything I had imagined. Even the smallest adventures of life develop on lines I had never suspected. A new discovery is invariably unlike what I had conceived: psychology entirely transcended my anticipations—I had thought of it merely as an extended physiology, and I found that it opened up continents the existence of which I had not even suspected. Places, and life in places, are never similar to what we had arranged for them: Rome had been merely a repetition of some ancient Belgian town which my mind had photographed, and Rome in reality took other shape. The war developed into conditions and methods different from anything, so far as I know, that the most exalted prophet had foretold. The one thing we can with certainty predicate as to the con-

ditions of Mars, or some other possibly inhabited planet, is that those conditions are not a repetition of life here: the difference is probably inconceivable. Reality does not repeat itself: it draws on an infinity of variety. Science is always discovering unsuspected causes, not the causes it had arbitrarily presumed. And therefore to reduce religious reality to the terms of the minute experience which we already possess, although a natural human tendency, is quite obviously an error. Yet it is this which is the basis of the whole modernist and agnostic case against the miraculous element. The fundamental ground of that case is that miracles are untrue because they are abnormal.

But we must take into account an opposite factor. When an abnormal influence expresses itself in the normal sphere, the tendency is always for that expression to clothe itself in normal form: this is the sacramental principle of life. I am inspired with a great love for a friend—but the moment that I try to express this love in words or action, the form suggests a merely commonplace and ordinary character. An artist is inspired by a great theme: but the theme becomes hidden behind the usual machinery of verse and prose, of notes or colour, as the case may be. Once we begin to analyse the form, it is difficult not to reject the soul: anatomy cannot find the soul. If I examine some passage of Wagner, chord by chord, it is hard to leave room for the element which gives it an almost divine value. The chords are ordinary chords, the rhythm and the succession of notes are perfectly normal: where, then, is the inspiration? In other words, life is so sacramental that we translate into our own terms and conceptions all the inspired and superhuman and miraculous phenomena. The sunset, for me, is just as beautiful and just as mediocre as I choose to conceive it. It is possible entirely to overlook the

spiritual inspiration in the chemical colouring and through the weakness of my own perceptions.

We must remember this when we consider the miracles as they would have seemed to us, or as they must have seemed to many who beheld them. They were expressed sufficiently normally to have been capable of being regarded as natural events. When the deaf were made to hear or the dumb to speak, the impediment was removed by some process of auto-suggestion. When the tempest was stilled, it seemed only that an anticyclone had arrived a little more suddenly than usual. When the lunatic was made whole, some pressure happened to be removed from his brain. Even when the dead were raised, it was possible to suppose that they were awakened only from a cataleptic trance. The sacramental system is always capable of this, that the form is readily discovered, and the form is so natural an explanation that it appears to be a complete explanation. To the consistent materialist there is no element in the portrait of a Titian or Van Dyck other than the mixture of colour and the design: yet, if an exact copy is made it lacks a certain inspiration, and the absence is not the absence of a material line or the difference of colour, but the absence of a subtle element which is entirely super-physical.

§ 5.

Lastly, we may name as the necessary mark of a divine incarnation the resurrection or victory over death.

If the divine is divine it is infinite, and it must therefore transcend death. We should not perhaps expect to find that the victory includes the victory of the body, and yet, now we can look back on that claim,

we can see by reason that even this does not clash with probabilities. For we are learning to appreciate by the aid of later science that physical matter is not separate from, or uncombinable with, spirit or life: it is rather an expression of spirit. The contact of so immense a concentration or outpouring of the Source of life, so immense that it needed no human paternal agency, must have affected the physical body in which it was clothed. And if matter is not ultimately divisible from spirit, it may be capable of being lifted into influences which lie beyond the reach of physical decomposition. If life is really sacramental, then the spirit spiritualises the form it uses, the embrace which love has inspired becomes itself sacred because of the inspiration, and the inanimate portrait which the artist has painted becomes itself a living masterpiece. We know that this is true to our experience, and that the form never remains separate and unaffected by the influence behind it. Therefore, it is not really surprising to be told that the tomb is empty, and the human body of God was raised from the dead.

An immense amount of mental energy has been devoted to the contention that there is no historical evidence for the Resurrection of Christ. The primary proof, as we shall presently see, rests on the testimony of human consciousness. But there is an indirect reply to the historical criticism, and it is this: Admittedly, within a short time after the alleged Resurrection, an energetic Christian nucleus was proclaiming that the tomb was empty. The claim, if false, was extremely easy to answer. If the Jews had stolen the body, they had only to produce the body. If the Christians had hidden the body, it seems incredible that the crime should not have been exposed by the thousands of enemies who were interested in

doing so. A claim which rests on fraud and delusion can only flourish if there is no determined interest to resist it. No one is sufficiently concerned with the claims of some American gentleman to be St. John Baptist to dispute the evidence: but, from the first, the Christian disciples were surrounded by a multitude of hostile critics who were violently concerned to crush the new sect by any possible means. It is significant, indeed, that they never produced the body of Christ.

§ 6.

We pass finally, in this context, to a consideration of the claims of rival religions, and we are met with the fact that Christianity fulfils the conditions which we have outlined. It is based certainly on a more ambitious claim than any other religion has made—namely, that its Master was none other than the God of the whole universe. A religion is not proved because of the daring of its claims. But so far as there is any truth in the contention that such an incarnation is probable, so far there is probability in the validity of a religion which alone makes such a claim.

There are two directions from which a denial of Christianity can be advanced. One takes the form of a rejection of the Christian claims because of their internal nature, and the other criticises those claims in the light of rival religious claims, and the failure of Christianity to convert the majority of mankind.

We need not spend time in examining the first of these objections, for the whole of this book, and not merely this section, is devoted to the object of vindicating the probabilities of Christian doctrine. We need only re-emphasise that the Incarnation is a stumbling-block fundamentally because the human mind does not believe in the unusual or unique. Behind the

inability of thousands of men to accept the deity of Christ is the conviction that such a supreme event is impossible. Unique events do not happen: the earth continues to move, the natural law proceeds without interruption. Such theories as the Incarnation are untrue to the routine of experience.

But any tendency to presupposition along these lines is false to the wider interpretation of history. The routine of law and order is, at isolated moments, convulsed by some stupendous event which hurls to pieces all the ordered system and annihilates the careful calculations of those who trusted to the continuity of normal events. What else must have been the destruction of Pompeii, the Lisbon earthquake, or, in more recent times, the convulsion which suddenly overwhelmed an island in the West Indies? Nor are such events to be found only in the paroxysms of nature. Human history is shaped by a continual intervention of the abnormal. The recent war was a shock to humanity largely because men in 1914, as a whole, could not believe that such an upheaval was possible. The Incarnation of God as Christ is not proved because it is stupendous, but the inclination to disbelieve it because it is stupendous is clearly without justification.

The constructive proof of the Christian claim is built, as we shall see, on another basis. But before we turn from the destructive criticism, we must consider for a moment the standpoint of that small body of opinion which has held, not merely that Christ never claimed to be God, but that he never existed. The test of this criticism must be an extension of the test which we applied to the arguments against the Resurrection. We know that the Christians were an energetic community within the lifetime of the generation which would have seen Christ. If the

story were false, if no such person as Christ had been tried before Pontius Pilate and crucified, the enemies of Christianity had merely to appeal to the civil authority: Pontius Pilate or his representatives would at once have replied that the whole story was untrue, and have vindicated the denials. The fact that the claim was being made within a few months of the Resurrection, that converts were being made, and that not a suggestion was attempted on the lines which critics, a few thousand years afterwards, have adopted, is eloquent and significant. It is so significant that it can lead to only one conclusion.

§ 7.

This body of consciousness as to the truth of the full Christian tradition is, indeed, as I have already suggested, the surest test. The response of a body of conscious assent can only mean that the claim has been verified by a corporate human intelligence. Something within men has leapt to a recognition of the doctrine: between humanity and the Faith has been revealed an intellectual and emotional affinity. So strongly is this the case that one form of criticism has taken the form of maintaining that religion is only subjective, that it is created by man's imagination because it is what he desires. This, as we have seen, does not account for the fact that this consciousness includes a large element of what has evoked enlightened and reasoned examination, and is the fruit not only of desire, but of criticism. It does not account for the variety of form of religious belief, nor the uniformity of the fundamentals of that belief, since, if all men had accepted what was taught them, without criticism, the form would have been the same: while, if it were the creation only of what men wanted, it would not have been fundamentally uniform

—in view of the different desires which the many types and races of men possess. Nor would it contain so many unexpected tenets. We shall frequently meet with indications that the religious tradition has taken turns, and professed a revelation, which is quite different from what we should have anticipated, so different, indeed, that the unexpectedness itself becomes a line of criticism, on the ground that such doctrines are inexplicable and contrary to reasonable comprehension.

It is the consciousness of the human race which is the test, and the second objection to the Christian tradition is, therefore, much the more serious. It might have been thought that if so tremendous a fact as the Incarnation had really occurred it would have compelled a universal conviction. If we look back at the history of Europe, we certainly find such an assent, for the consciousness of Christ has not only transformed, but literally created Europe. We have already discussed the reasons for the rejections of Christ by individuals in an individual age: the negative attitude towards any claim is inevitable. But the much more serious difficulty remains as to the failure of Christianity to win Asia, and to unseat in the consciousness of the East the rival claims of Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, and other faiths.

Where the modern mind is inclined to be at all tolerant towards religion, it favours the attitude of regarding different religions as parallel systems which can be chosen according to the temperament and requirements of the race or individual. The modern mind considers that missionary propaganda is a symptom of unwarrantable bigotry. And we are tempted at first sight very much to acquiesce in this proposition. For nothing seems more obvious, when we apply the test of corporate conscious assent, than that, while Christianity has been found suitable for

the West, the other religions have proved better able to meet the needs of Eastern minds. We shall meet the same phenomenon when we consider the various forms of Christianity. "One man," says the modern mind, "is æsthetic and therefore obviously is better suited to be a Catholic; another is austere, and therefore it is right he should be a Puritan; a third is independent, and therefore he is justified in accepting no form of institutionalism." When we remember that many men, intelligent, unbiassed, and honestly desirous of finding truth, have looked into the face of Christianity and accepted Buddhism, or have examined Catholicism and become Quakers, it seems difficult to refute the conclusion that no one religion is meant for all, but that the variety of human types is such that there must be a corresponding variety of religion. Christianity, therefore, becomes one religion among many and must never expect, or try, entirely to replace its rivals.

But we must appreciate what this proposition involves. It involves apparently a rejection of the Incarnation. For if Christ is really the incarnation of God on earth, he stands in a position quite incomparable to that which is occupied by any other religious founder. The attempt to maintain, as does modern Theosophy, that other incarnations of Christ have occurred, as in Krishna, or are about to occur, in the person of an Indian boy, seems difficult to reconcile with such evidence as we possess. If Christ was Krishna in another form, it is hard to understand why he never referred to this previous incarnation when the followers of that previous religion were still in existence. And a frequency of incarnation, or manifestation in any form, robs the Incarnation of that pivot-position which, as we have seen, it would probably possess.

The problem of comparative religion did not trouble

less tolerant ages. To the stern, uncompromising zealot, who sees no good in any religion but his own, there is no problem. Let us freely admit that the modern attitude, except where it is a mere negative, or an equal indifference or contempt for all religions, finds it difficult to give a monopoly of claim to one religion only because it is animated by humane and broad principles, and possesses a wide enough vision to appreciate the fact that many religions have had their saints, and many religions have proved their inspiration.

Is a solution impossible? Is the claim of Christianity irreconcilable with the wider sympathy which the modern mind instinctively demands? The answer must not only explain this problem, but it must remove the objection that Christianity, after two thousand years, has failed to convince a large portion of the human race.

And the solution is this. Clearly it is merely loose thought to suppose that all religions are equal. We have already seen that one of the cardinal laws of creation is that, not of equality, but of gradation. Religions would not be likely to be any more equal than the dog and the vegetable are equal, or Shakespeare and Alfred Austin are equal, and any study of comparative religion will confirm that conclusion. Buddhism, for example, is an infinitely greater conception than the crudities of South Sea island fetish worship, or the sheer militant puritanism of Islam. But all religions, superior or inferior, are degrees of manifestation. The most orthodox Christian teaching has never denied the lesser inspirations and the uncovenanted mercies. But that aspect has been too little emphasised. What we have, in the light of modern criticism, to enlarge upon is the fact that all the great religions comparatively draw their inspiration from God.

And there is the further truth that no religion, however complete objectively in its theology, is complete in the interpretation of that theology until it has won the allegiance and incorporated the interpretation of all types and races. In that sense Buddhism and Christianity are capable of fusion, for Christianity will be more completely understood by Christians when the Buddhist world is Christian. The test as to the supreme religion is precisely this capacity to absorb and include within itself the positive revelation of other religions, and that is one reason why I accept Christianity rather than its rivals. We may press this conclusion even further. The revelation may be complete, the Faith may be once delivered to the saints. But truth is infinite, and *there is no limit to the comprehension and interpretation and meaning* of the Faith. Therefore, however complete for its own purposes, the present expression of the Christian Church has not reached the finality of comprehension. The Church is " being led into all truth ": she develops her understanding of the Faith. It may well be, therefore, that at present the presentation of Christian revelation is not sufficiently complete to have drawn out and expressed in the conscious mind the aspects of truth which find an assent in the Eastern consciousness. If Christianity is, as I believe it to be, the supreme religion, it will contain the constructive truths of other revelations: but the full meaning of the Christian Faith can only gradually unfold. And hence its partial development may well have been on lines so far specifically adaptable to the West.

It is easy to drift into platitudes over these suggestions. I do not pretend to imagine a Utopia of reunion, or to imply that there are no conflicting doctrines which seem incapable of reconciliation. I am merely presenting an outline of the answer which

I believe to be the true answer to the problem of the rival claims and the incessant controversies of the religious world. And it is because I can trace in the Catholic Faith what seems to me to be the complement in essence of all faiths, that I believe it.

CHAPTER FOUR

The need for human redemption

§ 1.

WE have now reached a stage where we may claim that the Christian tradition of the Incarnation of God the Son is not only tenable, but is probable. We have admitted that other religions and a great body of materialist or semi-materialist thought does not accept this tradition. But the cause of this non-acceptance does not weaken the Christian case. Christians may not as yet have fully realised what the Incarnation means, and, if so, they would accordingly have presented that doctrine in a form which fails to make contact with human consciousness. Moreover, Western agnosticism, whether it be materialist or vitalist, or purely negative, has rejected the claim because it has failed to appreciate the truths on which it rests. It has failed to perceive that a Supreme Intelligence dominates the inanimate forces of the universe, and that this Intelligence must have revealed himself, both in the immanent sense, in nature and in human nature, and also in the concentrated, sacramental sense of an historical human incarnation.

We now pass on to a doctrine which forms a further groundwork in the Christian tradition, and which has given rise to still further controversy. It is the doctrine of the Atonement.

The need for this direct Incarnation arose, according to the Christian claim, not only because God desired so to reveal himself, but also because it was to be the means of human redemption. And the fiercest criticism has thereupon raged over the claim that God, in human form, could, by dying on the Cross, have brought about human redemption.

Our first task is to inquire whether the need for human redemption seems a probable theory. The answer to this is not in itself difficult, but it involves a further problem which is probably one of the most difficult mankind has had to face. It is the problem of evil. What is evil, and how was it created? Either God created evil, in which case he is not all-good, or someone else created it, in which case God is not the creator of all things. All forms of theism have wrestled with this dilemma. It is a difficulty which is not escaped by those who refuse to admit any scheme of intelligent creation. For, as we have already seen, we are undoubtedly faced on all sides with a positive element which we term "evil." There are few facts of which we are more aware than that there is a pole of virtue and beauty and truth and an opposite pole of evil, ugliness, and error. We observe physical and mental disease, and we know instinctively that it is evil. We know that dirt is evil, but that cleanliness is good. We know that when a man exerts certain powers, such as the procreation of art or the exercise of reason, he is doing something better than when he destroys or causes injury. There may be a multitude of border-line cases, on which opinions may differ: but, fundamentally, we are as aware that there is good and evil as we are aware of heat and cold or light and darkness. That they are realities objective to man, and not conditions due to his own imagination, is also a fact which we are bound to admit, and of

which we are, indeed, conscious beyond all possible doubt.

What, then, is evil? A certain school of modernist thought has attempted to avoid the theory of a duality of God and devil, by insisting that evil is merely the negative of good. A considerable amount of evil for which man is responsible—and which we will, therefore, describe as sin—is undoubtedly due to omission, and is of this negative quality. Failure to reason, ignorance, filth, are directly the negatives of certain action—they are the absence of the corresponding virtue. But a very simple illustration will at once be seen to undermine the claim that all sin can be explained in this way. The negative of love is apathy or indifference, and that may be, under certain circumstances, an evil. But hate is quite distinct from indifference, and it is certainly not a negative. It is as active an emotion as love.

A further examination of this example may lead us to a conclusion which throws some light on the problem. Hate, if we analyse it carefully, will be found to be the same emotion as love: it is perverted love. The nature of all active sin is similarly found to be the misuse of energy which is in itself good. Sin is the wrong application of human energy, the employment of human powers in a direction which creates evil results. And, therefore, a certain light is undoubtedly thrown on the difficulty. None of the powers which man possesses through God's creation are themselves evil: they are capable of being used for good or evil. God did not create sin: he only created human powers which are capable of being turned into sin.

The answer is not complete, for it shows that the divine creation leaves room for this misuse and consequent evil. Why God gave man a power which he

knew man could misuse—why he did not make man an automaton—seems to me to be a question which we can neither answer, nor which there is any need for us to try to answer. The existence of human free will, within limits, is undeniable, whatever its purpose. There could be no free will without this capacity to sin or to do good. If we blame God for allowing man to have the power to sin, we blame him for giving man the intelligence to possess free will.

Those, indeed, who declare it to be an offence against the elementary idea of justice that God should give man a power which he can use either for good or for evil, forget that a far more fundamental law would have been violated had this power been withheld. There is no virtue in doing good where there is no possibility of doing anything else. There could be, so far as we can conceive, no such thing as human virtue without the possibility of human sin. Far from being unjust in allowing man this choice, God gave man thereby the only opportunity he could possess of proving his value and his virtue.

§ 2.

The second conclusion at which we can arrive is that this power to misuse energy creates, like everything else in the universe of cause and effect, certain consequences. It creates consequences which bear both on the sinner and his surroundings. If a man beats his wife, she suffers. Possibly it creates ill-temper in the wife, which reacts on the children and the neighbours. No sin, no act of any kind, can take place without bringing into being a chain of results.

Eastern religions have described these results as "karma," and the Christian gospel has declared that

that which a man sows he shall reap. Further, it has reminded us of the inevitable law that the sins of the father are visited upon the children. We may describe this law as unjust, but we cannot deny the truth of the assertion. Because rulers and statesmen planned the recent war, millions of men and women were killed and injured. Actually we consider this principle unjust only if we cling to an extreme theory of individualism. We choose to imagine that a man should be only responsible for what he himself does. But individualism pressed to these extremes is an obvious error. We are slowly beginning to appreciate that the whole human race is one corporate body, and that we all benefit or suffer in degree from the action of any part of that body. It is of little use to quarrel with the principle. Individualism is not the system of God's creation. Nations are interdependent as well as persons. And I confess that to me the individualist theory seems altogether inferior in conception to the corporate theory, whatever its consequences. Mankind as one indivisible family is incalculably nobler than mankind as a myriad of independent atoms.

The history of the human race throughout the ages is partly the history of an accumulation of evil consequences. What would these consequences be? If good is ultimately the supreme force, if use and not misuse is the note of all progress and evolution, then it inevitably follows that gradually the process of man's evolution would become blocked. In a universe of cause and effect sin cannot be without effect, and, since humanity is one unit, all humanity must be affected. It matters little what phrases we use to describe this effect. We may speak of human salvation being imperilled, or of spiritual evolution being stagnated. The reality is so obvious that it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion. In more vulgar and commercial

language we may say that the price of human sin must have become too heavy for man to pay. To deny this must ultimately, so far as I can see, lead to a denial of the law of cause and effect, and of the society of the human race.

Nearly all religions are at one with Christianity in affirming this consequence. Eastern thought especially witnesses to the human unit of the whole race: and it is equally emphatic as to the "karma" or price which must be paid for sin. Nor, if we are to turn from philosophical theories to the sphere of realism, does it seem any more possible to avoid the effect of human evil. When we look back at history, or even when we concentrate our attention upon modern life, when we recall the horrors of slavery, the massacres of war, the vice, the cruelty, the craft and lust and selfishness of every generation, it is incredible that anything but a divine intervention should avert the results of this continuous ill-doing. He must be blind to the plainest conditions around him who doubts the absolute necessity for some infinite act of redemption, some superhuman scheme of atonement, which should remove the immense barrier which the sin of the ages has set up.

§ 3.

So far, indeed, most of us, I imagine, will agree. It is when we approach the doctrine of the Atonement that intellectual difficulties become acute.

But the significant feature of such non-assent is that it is negative. It is not some parallel claim, but it is the rejection of one positive claim. And there is a further significance in the non-assent. Judged by the test of human consciousness, we might say that the Christian doctrine of the atonement has failed to secure

a large element of consent, and has therefore failed to prove its validity. When, however, we examine the ground for the objection, we discover that it rests, not on a consciousness that the claim is untrue, but on a failure to comprehend the claim.

We shall see this more clearly, perhaps, if we state the case against the Christian doctrine in its crudest form. How, it is asked, can the crucifixion of someone, be he human or divine, two thousand years ago in Palestine, have redeemed mankind? At the most it was an example, and it can have had no mechanical or practical effect. This objection, however it is phrased, involves a denial of two fundamental facts. They are fundamental, and therefore both difficult to explain and easy to ignore. But their difficulty is due precisely to their fundamental character. Their dimensions ensure that, owing to the limitations of our consciousness, we may easily fail to perceive them.

The first of these is the power of what we may describe as magnetic attraction. It is the power whereby one person may attract to himself and carry the burden of the actions of others and their result. This phenomenon is, of course, too rare to lie within our normal experience: it can only be appreciated if we realise the single individuality of the human race, a characteristic which, as we have seen, certainly ensures that the sins, and the results of sin, are transferred from one generation to another. In this, perhaps, we may recognise some likeness to this form of magnetism. In any case, even though such magnetism belongs to the mysterious, unfamiliar realm of mystical experience, the evidence seems to be too persistent to be ignored: men have, on rare occasions, actually drawn to themselves the sins and the consequences of the sins of other men. It is impossible to read the testimony of the mystics of any

of the great religions without consistently meeting this claim.

It is perfectly reasonable to declare that the evidence for this claim is too rare, and therefore remote from practical experience, to warrant our acceptance. But the logical attitude is then to remain agnostic, and no more to deny the possibility of this form of magnetism, than to admit its existence. The suspicious tendency of rationalist thought is precisely this tendency to reject the possibility of any theory which lies outside the minute circle of our knowledge and imagination.

Magnetism is possible: and I submit it is probable when we consider the evidence of the transfer of good and evil qualities through heredity. Therefore, if we admit that human action could have created an amount of evil consequence too heavy for it to bear, and further that the magnetic transfer of this body of sin and its results to one person is not improbable, we remove the main difficulty to an admission that the process of the Atonement is possible.

The Atonement, however, loses its significance if we deny the divinity of Christ. The second factor which we must take into consideration is the immanence of God in humanity, and the concentration of this divine immanence in one single human person in time. All denial of the Atonement rests, so far as I can see, on an inability to accept these two phenomena. It is the failure to believe that human evil could be transferred with all its consequences to one Person, and that this Person was God the Son—not God as objective and remote from humanity, but God as, and in, humanity. Mr. H. G. Wells, in many of his later works, perceives the immanence of God in man, though he fails to recognise the counter-pole of God the subject, of whom the Incarnate God is the complete reflection. Still, even in his incomplete thesis,

the Atonement becomes a probability. God as humanity pays the penalty of humanity, and thereby removes, by paying this price, the blockage of sin and its consequences. Man's spiritual evolution can take place: salvation is made possible. The barrier is swept down by the concentration of God's incarnation and the corresponding concentration of sin into this God-man.

Between belief in the deity of Christ, however, and belief that he was only man, there must lie an impassable gulf: the implications of the Sacrifice of Christ as God are so immense. I will mention one. If Christ is the Infinite God, his voluntary death is the death of him who rules and creates the laws of the universe. He is these laws and forces. Therefore these forces, which govern and affect our laws so intimately, are not blind and merciless influences, without design, but part of him who for the love of humanity paid the supreme penalty of its sins.

For myself I confess that one of the main considerations which has confirmed me in the truth of the Christian doctrine is the nature of the case which directly conflicts with it. Modern thought, where it comes into definite opposition to Christianity, seems to me to suffer from two acute fallacies. The first is that it rejects each particular doctrine by examining it out of its context; and the second is that it differs from such doctrines, without exception, by presenting a much narrower conception where it sets up any rival constructive claim.

It is suspiciously easy to belittle the theory of redemption through the death of a single person on the Cross, and that is the line by which the looser forms of popular thought repudiate the Atonement. But in this, as in all Christian theology, the doctrine must stand or fall as a link in a complete chain. The

sacrifice of Calvary is only reasonable if we arrive first at the conclusion that the universe is not the creation of blind forces but of an Infinite Intelligence: that this intelligence involves a trinity in which there is the manifested " Person " or Word of God, as well as a " Person " who is transcendent to the physical universe: that man has created, by means of free will, an accumulation of evil, which acts and reacts upon him to an extent which must have become overwhelming: that physical events are so interrelated with spiritual and superchemical reality that the Manifestation of God in man could be concentrated in the historic and individual Incarnation: and that, similarly, it is possible to concentrate and transfer the whole action of human sin and its effects on to the shoulders of this Incarnate God. Each of these links in the chain appears to be intelligible and, so far as our human intelligence can perceive, probable. The physical Passion of Christ is, therefore, a mere reflection of an infinitely greater reality. The Thirst, the loss of the Sense of God, the death of Christ on the Cross, are but the forms by which the results of sin were fulfilled. It is as if Christ, who had never sinned, had committed the sins of all the world and was paying the penalty of their price. Only so can we understand what is meant by the Atonement.

The other fallacy, from which a denial of the Atonement appears to suffer, applies equally to the method by which the other fundamental doctrines of Christianity are attacked. If two theories were advanced as to the state of life on the planet Mars,—assuming it was established there were some form of Martian life,—we may imagine one theory claiming that such life was an exact reproduction of our own, while the other declared that life was made up of invisible bodies of thought. In that case we should say that the second

theory, while it must be examined on its own merits, was less improbable than the first: for science certainly proves that reality is more likely to lie beyond than within the narrow range of our experience and imagination.

In the same way anti-Christian doctrine differs from Christian doctrine in almost every instance, because its conception is so much narrower. Mr. H. G. Wells, for example, sees God in his immanent aspect, as the personification of corporate humanity, but he rejects the wider Christian conception of God also transcendent, not only to humanity but to all creation. Anti-Christian criticism has stumbled before the Trinity precisely because the immensity of that doctrine makes it difficult to comprehend. It has failed to envisage an Infinite Intelligence, and correspondingly to grasp the meaning of a redemption by the Sacrifice of God in man for man. It has not advanced a still wider claim: it has rejected the Christian doctrine by limiting itself to the conditions and probabilities with which it is familiar in its own parish. And it is because it is confined to ordinary human experience, before which such a scheme as the Atonement must necessarily appear unreal and therefore unlikely, that it is so significant. For, apart from all other arguments in its favour, we can say this at least: that the difficulties which the doctrine of the Atonement arouses are exactly the type of difficulty which would arise from the truth.

§ 4.

The belief that a redemption became necessary through the accumulated results of human free will presupposes a condition when this evil consequence had not arisen. In other words, it depends on the tradition

of a Fall, a spiritual devolution, whether sudden or gradual. This doctrine, indeed, we find to be a fundamental part of the Christian tradition.

This tradition, however, has presented little detail as to the nature of such a Fall. It has told its story in a purely allegorical form. The Christian creed involves no exact interpretation of that story; it has contented itself merely with the statement that such a process originally occurred.

Such practical evidence as we have lies chiefly in the history of each human individual. That history appears to reproduce in miniature the process of the child's entire progenity: there is a plant-stage, various animal stages, a primitive human stage, and an expanding human development. These phenomena which have now been established by science suggest some ground for the theory that the spirit within the human being may have originated through the subhuman species. Certainly the history of human evolution appears to be reproduced in this minute form in the individual human being. If that is so, there is certainly a stage of spiritual innocence preceding the first misuse of human will. It is so gradual a process that it admits of no rigid demarcations of period. We cannot say that at a given moment the child has begun to sin, any more than we can say that at a similar instant the embryo has become a human intelligence. But this absence of demarcation does not destroy the evidence that such evolution undoubtedly takes place.

Similarly, however impossible it may be to attempt any detailed definition, we know undoubtedly that before every act of misuse—*i.e.*, every act of sin—there is a precedent condition of innocence or purity. The pre-fallen state of man may mean no more than this, and the innocence of the child may be an exact analogy. We can only say that the very idea of sin, a phenomenon

which no one can deny, however he defines it, presupposes a condition of sinlessness, precedent to the particular sin.

Mr. H. G. Wells evidently imagines that he has demolished the possibility of a Fall by pointing to the discoveries of prehistoric human relics which, he alleges, reveal a complete human evolution from animal intelligence, and not a pre-fallen human intelligence. But the reasoning is amazingly weak. In the first place, the doctrine of the Fall does not, as we have seen, necessarily involve the claim that man in his pre-fallen state possessed a civilised intelligence. Secondly, the discoveries which date back little more than seventy years are so limited that the evidence they present is extremely incomplete: other discoveries may produce conclusions quite opposite to those which Mr. Wells advances. Thirdly, the opinion of scientists as to the nature of these united discoveries varies considerably. Fourthly, the discoveries are those only of a few isolated remains: other races may have been in existence at the same period, in other parts of the world, of a highly civilised character. The absence of scientific discovery does not establish the truth of the Christian tradition: but it certainly does not refute it.

§ 5.

Christianity is equally reticent over the fate of man beyond the grave. It contents itself virtually with two statements, one that man survives eternally, and the other that there are two ultimate conditions—Heaven and Hell. The doctrine of purgatory falls rather within the second portion of this book, since it is a distinctively Catholic doctrine.

This reticence stands out in marked contrast to

certain occult religious traditions, and to spiritualism, which profess to give detailed descriptions of some phases of future existence. It is as if the Christian tradition, indeed, had deliberately turned a searchlight on man's present existence and left both past and future in utter darkness, revealing only a minimum degree of such truth as may be necessary to guide him in his conduct in this life. And when we observe the dangerous effects which a study of occultism undoubtedly invites, whether we regard such effects as due to psychic or normal causes, the reason for this comparative silence is not difficult to conjecture.

It is essential that we should recognise the strict limitation of the official Christian doctrine on this point, since a large amount of controversy has arisen over what is admittedly the individual and unofficial interpretation, and interpolation upon, that doctrine. Moreover, if a future existence is admitted, the probabilities are that once again its conditions are so remote from our normal experience, that any attempt to interpret the official Christian statement would be inaccurate—not necessarily because the official statement is untrue, but because our minds are incapable of defining it. It is well that this fact should be emphasised, for much of the criticism of the Christian Heaven and Hell is a criticism merely of the unauthorised attempts to describe conditions of which we can have no experience.

There are, however, two definite assertions to which the official tradition is committed, and both of these are the subject of controversy.

The first concerns the immense problem of human survival. On no subject has there been wider speculation, for the problem is one which immediately and intimately concerns us all. A man who is ordinarily bored to distraction by philosophical studies may be

pardoned for wondering what is ultimately going to happen to him.

In a summary consideration such as this, the most convenient way in which to examine the probability of the religious claim for survival is to turn to the component parts of the human creature as he now is. We all agree that man possesses a material body: it is the only medium of our contact with the physical world. The evidence is equally strong that at death the material body undergoes so complete a process of decomposition that as an entity it is destroyed. Here the materialists stop: that is the limit of their belief. They admit of the existence of no element in man other than his material properties. And, since it is evident that at death these material properties, or body, decompose, there can be no survival.

The narrowness and incomplete nature of the materialist creed is, however, so obvious that it is not surprising that it should have been rejected by modern science and all forms of modern thought. It is opposed by certain glaring facts, one of which it is sufficient to mention. If inanimate is placed next to animate matter, a dead body next to a living body, there is seen to be a profound difference between the two. In the one the organism is corporately uncontrolled, or, as we should say, inactive: in the other the organism is in action. What, then, causes the difference between these conditions? It is the presence of the life-force.

The materialist is therefore driven to declare that the life-force is a material substance. But it is quite certainly non-material. It cannot be detected by any of the physical senses, it cannot be weighed, and there is not a single particular in which it can be said to possess material property. Yet it is undeniably present. Modern thought has accordingly abandoned materialism for idealism or vitalism. It admits a

second element in man—the spirit. And its attitude towards the problem of survival is therefore that, at death, the spirit or life-force—there being no evidence that it is capable of material decomposition—escapes into the body of life from which it has been separated. There is no personal survival, but only the absorption of the spirit within us into the perpetual life of the universe.

This conclusion is as reasonable as materialism is impossible. But it is still incomplete. Nature tends to trinities rather than dualities. There is a third element in man, which vitalism has ignored. If we consider the human race as a whole, we cannot but be impressed by the distinctions both in appearance and character between the individuals of that race. In spite of the limitations caused by the uniformity of design and feature, it is amazing to realise that, out of the millions alive and the millions who have ever lived, no man has ever been identically like another. What is the cause of this extraordinary distinction ?

It is not the spirit, for, as the vitalists would themselves admit, the life-force is not in itself an individual characteristic: it is rather indivisible and impersonal. Nor is it the body, for, if this were so, we should find that where two material forms were nearly similar, there would be a corresponding similarity between the individualities. Nor is it the combination of spirit and body, for neither of these possesses even the germ of individuality. The presence of a third element seems, therefore, to be inevitable, and, at the least, probable. It is the individuality, or soul, which contains the spirit and moulds the body.

Certainly our consciousness testifies to the existence of this element. There is nothing of which man is more aware than his individuality. Indeed, so strong is this sense that it may easily, as has been previously

suggested, override the opposite sense of his co-unity with the rest of humanity. It seems probable that in the subhuman species the system is rather that of a group-soul. I confess that I am sceptical as to any individual distinction of appearance between potatoes; the herd instinct is certainly stronger the farther we travel from human influences. Conversely, the herd or tribe instinct is stronger in the types of primitive man who are less far removed from the animal kingdom.

We can now apply this theory to the problem of survival.

The only evidence we have is that the physical body suffers decomposition at death: we have no evidence that either the soul or spirit ceases to survive—indeed, the nature of the spirit leads us to assume that the life-force in some way survives, since its decomposition is impossible: that is the vitalist theory, the opinion probably of most present-day thinkers. The issue between Christian and non-Christian thought, therefore, becomes centred in the fate of the soul. Does the soul survive—in other words, is there any personal survival? Or does the soul follow the fate of the body, and does the spirit alone continue impersonally?

If the evidence admitted only of one conclusion, this most insistent human problem could be solved, and belief would make way for knowledge. But in reason—that is, by deduction from evidence—we must continue to deal only with probabilities. If our previous conclusion as to the probability of the existence of the soul is admitted, there seems to be only one line of argument which can be used against its survival: and therefore it is continually used. It consists of pointing out that apparently the soul is entirely dependent upon the mechanism of the body, that if a man is knocked on the head his individuality is affected, and that if certain of his glands function

abnormally, the whole of his temperamental outlook is changed. Therefore, it is argued that the death of the body means the failure of the soul to function, which is death.

M. Bergson has effectively disclosed the weakness of this argument. The argument leads virtually to this: Suppose that A can only speak to me through the telephone, because of geographical and other circumstances, and that when the telephone breaks down A can therefore no longer communicate. If the argument against the survival of the soul is true, it can equally be claimed that A has no existence apart from the telephone, since when the telephone breaks down A is silent! Apart altogether from any separate knowledge we might have that A exists, we can assert that A's dependence on the telephone is no proof that he has no independent existence.

The argument, in fact, merely shows that the trinity of soul, body, and spirit are immensely dependent, so that an injury to the body may affect the soul. It does not show that when this dependence is removed by the death of the body, the soul cannot function independently.

Opposed to this is the consideration that the soul, being immaterial, cannot be affected by physical death, which is material decomposition: it does not possess the chemical substance to decompose. Secondly, the law of gradation suggests there are superphysical forms of existence which suggest affinity to the nature of the soul, and in which the soul would not be disabled because of the absence of physical property. As we have seen, the law of gradation involves a gradation of intelligence, and increasing intelligence certainly suggests the survival, at least in the immediate stages of a future life, of an individual personality.

Thirdly, if the spirit survives, it is more probable that it survives within the sheath of the soul—*i.e.*,

individualised—than that a sudden break occurs and its conditions are abruptly transformed. For nature seems to incline rather to gradual processes than sudden metamorphoses: the process of procreation is gradual: physical death, in some of its features, is gradual.

In short, the argument for personal survival is probable, because the materialist argument is incredible and the vitalist or idealist argument is incomplete. If the spirit exists, it must survive, and equally, because the spirit survives, it seems probable that the soul survives.

But the Christian doctrine makes a further assertion: it claims the resurrection of the body. It makes a bare statement and offers no further detail, save that there is a period before this resurrection, during which the soul remains discarnate.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is left, indeed, so entirely an outline that it is impossible by reason to estimate its probabilities. We can only observe the confusion which has arisen by translating both the σαρξ and σωμα of the scriptural text as "body." The survival of a purely physical body would clearly be impossible. Orthodox Christianity admits that in the "resurrection body" there may be no single physical particle. The resurrection may mean the survival of a bodily form, in which the soul is once more clothed. Or it may refer to some continuous property in the body which survives death and forms the nucleus of the "resurrection body," just as in physical life some perpetual entity seems necessary to account for a physical identity which survives the almost complete and continual renewal of the physical body. If we cannot prove, we equally cannot deny, such possibilities. And we need only take note of the claim that the trinity of man, and not merely a duality of soul and spirit, survives death.

PART TWO

THE CASE FOR CATHOLICISM

CHAPTER ONE

The Sacraments

§ 1.

SO far we have been concerned with the issues between Christianity and non-Christianity. We now turn to an entirely different sphere and examine the rival claims of the two main forms of Christianity, which we may describe as Protestantism and Catholicism.

It will be easier for our purpose to examine the Protestant outlook first.

Protestantism is based, so far as it differs from Catholicism, on two theories which we will call *commemoration* and *subjectivity*.

Commemoration arises from the fact that Protestantism regards the life of Christ on earth as indicating a period which came definitely to an end at his Ascension, and which was superseded by a period of an entirely different character. When Christ was on earth his divinity was "localised" in his visible physical body. He spoke physically, and his words could be heard through the physical ears of his disciples. He healed by physical touch, he declared the forgiveness of sins by physical utterance, he was present with his disciples in a physical manner. At his Ascension these conditions ceased. Hereafter, though he had left with man a means of salvation, a Church which should feed and teach and continue the salvation he had wrought, these ministrations were of a spiritual and non-physical nature. He is present, as

God, in no localised manner, but everywhere. His voice can no longer be heard by the physical senses, the process of healing by direct touch has ceased. Revelation and ministry through visible means have come to an end, because no longer is Christ incarnate in a human form. He is, as God, no more present in one place than another. There is no longer a concentrated, specialised, incarnate manifestation of his divine power.

This Protestant theory of Christianity is *commemorative* because, if there is no longer this direct physical ministry, an enormous emphasis and importance at once falls upon the isolated, historical moment when such a ministry was in existence. A devout Protestant lady was once turning over the pages of an illustrated Bible and, on coming to a picture of our Lord preaching to his disciples, she exclaimed: "If only I could have lived then, rather than now!" This ejaculation is a crude, but exact, expression of the commemorative standpoint, for, though it is true that Christ, as God, is always and everywhere present, and by prayer and spiritual life can be drawn near to by every believer, it is also true that the time when there was a more direct and concentrated presence is a period which must be looked back upon with a certain wistful regret. For human beings who, in a physical life, depend so largely on the physical senses, a system or dispensation which is so entirely spiritual that it possesses no outward form or manifestation is harder to appreciate than a visible ministry with which the human senses can have direct contact. The time when Christ was on earth becomes, therefore, a period to which the human element in commemorative religion looks back with special emphasis and attention.

And this is exactly what we find to be the case among Protestant Christians. The Scriptures, which

are the exclusive record of that period, have a unique importance and an exclusive authority, their supreme prominence is undisputed. The sacraments of baptism and communion, which are the only sacraments in the Protestant religion, are regarded largely as pious memorials, and are fulfilled out of a reverent love for a past command. The Atonement becomes a single event which occurred at the given moment on a hill outside Jerusalem. Every detail of Protestant public worship is inspired with a desire to reproduce as nearly as possible the external conditions which obtained when Christian worship was first instituted. There is little room for development, since development would involve a gradual departure from that golden age which must alone be the pattern and inspiration. The Protestant religion may be likened to a photograph of a dead friend. It is true that the friend lives in a spiritual existence which we cannot imagine or approach. We cannot imagine, and this very inability tends to place an extreme emphasis upon the photo, as being the one visible reminder of that time, now ended, when our friend was with us in the flesh.

§ 2.

It follows almost inevitably that a *commemorative* religion is also *subjective*.

Since there is no outward manifestation of Christ's presence, since the reality of worship and the sacraments can have no physical form, and represent only the invisible omnipresence of God, the actual contact of religion with the human soul must depend on the disposition of the human being himself.

This will be seen more clearly if we consider a simple illustration. The Protestant standpoint we

have likened to a man gazing at a photograph: it is the one visible link he has with the past. But Protestantism is not so derelict as to suggest that there is no present reality: only, as we have seen, the present reality has no physical expression.

We may therefore take as our illustration a Beethoven sonata which was performed a number of years ago. The performance will never again be repeated, but it still exists, its reality being mysteriously perpetuated in a spiritual sphere which our physical ears cannot reach. Protestants are bidden therefore to gather together at times, and to listen with their spiritual senses to this spiritual performance. Now, since there are no physical sounds for them to hear, their perception of the spiritual sounds must depend entirely on themselves. If a physical performance of the sonata were to take place, the effect of it would depend not only on themselves, but, unless they actually shut out the sounds and closed their eyes to the sight of the performer, also upon the way in which the performer and the instrument played their part. We can imagine, for instance, a performance of Beethoven so amazing, that even a moderately unmusical listener would be impressed. In the silent gatherings which we have imagined, however, there being no objective physical performance, the appreciation and, indeed, the realisation, must depend entirely on the individual. One person will be rapt in ecstasy, another will hear nothing. However virile we may suppose the spiritual performance to be, the issue as to whether it will be heard by the individual will depend absolutely on the mood and disposition of the individual.

Protestantism has logically accepted this conclusion. It teaches that the spiritual reality of its two sacraments is entirely dependent on the disposition of the par-

ticipant. In Communion, the sacramental presence of our Lord is entirely subjective, he is present only, that is to say, if the communicant receives the bread and wine in faith: the elements remain bread and wine, and they do not even signify more, unless the participant consumes them with reverent belief. No perpetuation of the Beethoven sonata reaches the audience unless they themselves create the reality. The same tendency is to be found on the purely dogmatic side. Justification is by faith only, the criterion of truth is by the individual's private judgment of the Scriptures, not by the Scriptures objectively, but by the reader's own interpretation. The Church of Christ is not so much a visible organisation as the invisible body created by the faith of true believers. It would be inaccurate and unjust to suggest that Protestantism regards the sonata as existing only if the spiritual imagination of the audience creates the impression of the performance. The performance exists spiritually. But it is sacramental, it has real contact with the personal listener, only if he listens aright. It depends entirely on his own spiritual senses. It is not as when Christ was present in the flesh, and spoke and ministered, even if the people would not hear. That dispensation has ended. Now the spiritual reality of his mission is real only if man apprehends. The order of our times is unsacramental, for it has no objective physical manifestation.

§ 3.

It is important at the outset for us to realise that Catholic Christianity is not merely an opposite theory—in which case, according to the law of polarity, it would be only a further fragment of the truth. It contains the Protestant commemorative and subjective

theory. But it also includes a perpetuative and objective side.

Let us examine, first, these two additional or opposite features.

Catholicism is *perpetuative* inasmuch as it teaches that the direct ministry of Christ through physical agency did not end at the Ascension. This agency differs from that of the period of his earthly life. He is no longer visible in a human body, but he remains present in the sacraments. He forgives the sins of each penitent in the sacrament of Penance exactly as he forgave sins in Galilee. He lays his hands, through the bishop, on his chosen disciples in Ordination, exactly as he ordained his first Apostles. He heals sickness in Unction, he blesses the union of the bridegroom and bride as at Cana. Finally, he is present in the Mass, not to offer himself afresh, but to perpetuate the never-ending sacrifice of Calvary in a continuous action.

Catholicism is accordingly *objective* because this ministry, this presence of Christ through the sacraments, this continued sacrifice, is not dependent for its existence upon the disposition of the worshipper. Christ, according to Catholic teaching, is present in this special sacramental manner, even though his people are unaware of or indifferent to him. The sonata is played even if the audience is deaf. The reality of his presence is transcendent to the consciousness of his followers.

But this standpoint includes the Protestant theory. The sacramental ministry is in *substance* the same, but in form different from the period of his physical ministry. His sacramental presence is not subject to physical and chemical laws as was his bodily presence: he can be in more than one place at once, he is not dependent upon the conditions of time and location.

Conversely, his sacramental presence is not discernible by our physical senses, for the form which he uses is the form of bread and wine, or the voice or action of his human instruments, as in Absolution or Ordination. Consequently, the period when the form was his own and the *physical* senses of men could be aware of him has a unique authority, of which the present order is necessarily commemorative.

In the same way the Catholic sacramental system is subjective as well as objective. Christ may speak in Penance through the voice of his priest, but no grace of absolution reaches the penitent unless the penitent himself is penitent. He gives himself, body and spirit, in Communion, but the *realisation* and the efficacy of the gift depend entirely on the communicant. The sacraments are no automatic scheme of salvation. Man must, on his side, act if God's act is to affect him.

§ 4.

We may now ask which of these two theories is more likely to be true.

The first reason why Catholicism is the more probable is that, as we have seen, it contains the two poles of objectivity, or perpetuity, and subjectivity, or commemoration. Protestantism expresses the one pole only, and all truth contains two polar aspects. Without exception, a standpoint which concentrates and is limited to one pole is incomplete and a half truth.

The second reason why Catholicism is the more probable is a reason which is often given in favour of Protestantism. The Catholic doctrine of the sacraments is much less familiar to human experience. It is much easier to conceive of a rite which is only a pious remembrance, than a sacrament which claims

to be a living action. That is why the criticism of the Catholic doctrine lends itself so easily to crude objections. Because it expresses something which is far greater than human experience it is easy enough for a speaker in Hyde Park to hold it up to ridicule, or for a bishop to declaim it as magic.

The fact that a belief stretches far beyond our common-day experience does not prove it is true. But it suggests that it is much more probable: for truth always has this characteristic. The greater truths always lend themselves to the scorn of a tub-thumper for this very reason. Equally, men have laughed at the theory that the earth moves round the sun, or that the universe is infinite. These claims do not correspond with our little experiences. But the fact remains that truth tends to lie outside our experiences. It is highly suspicious if a truth is thus limited.

The third reason is one which concerns the principle that physical action is the reflection of super-physical —*i.e.*, mental and spiritual—activity. Acts are the physical expression of emotions and thoughts, and hence, as has been suggested in an earlier chapter, the whole of the historic episode of Christ's ministry is the manifestation of a ministry which exists, outside the range of time, in eternity. The fact that the Catholic sacramental system is perpetual, a continual extension of what happened during the earthly ministry has, therefore, a further claim to probability. For it is much more probable that the purpose of our Lord would be to represent as nearly as possible in time the realities of eternity, than that this historic episode should be a limited and finite ministry, isolated from its spiritual counterpart. The sacraments of the Church are designed rather to reproduce this eternal ministry, this continual sacrifice and communion, this perpetual outpouring of grace. The Sacrifice of Cal-

vary is always happening in eternity, and it happened on Calvary only because it is constantly happening in eternity. The Mass, therefore, bears a close affinity to this fact. It reproduces and reflects not merely, as a memorial, an event of two thousand years ago, but a perpetual action. And there is something accordingly significant in the fact that from the beginning of the Christian era Mass has been said daily at the Church's altars, and, since the Church exists in all parts of the world, the chain of Masses is literally continuous with the movement of the earth round the sun. These considerations are illustrated necessarily in crude form, but are none the less symbolic and, indeed, more than symbolic. They show that Catholicism is a far wider conception, and has a greater affinity to what we can dimly apprehend of spiritual eternities than a memorial and subjective theory.

§ 5.

The difference between the Catholic and the Protestant standpoint is really the difference between sacramentalism and non-sacramentalism.

The non-sacramentalist denies that there is any place or means which is particularly and specially the agency of God. "God is everywhere," he says, "therefore God is nowhere more present than anywhere else." There may be particular moments of inspiration, man may be more stirred by spiritual emotions in one set of circumstances than another: but this is entirely due to himself and not to any action of God. The analogy of the Beethoven sonata is a true one: for, to the non-sacramentalist, there is no special performance of the sonata: the audience only become spiritually reminiscent and aware of the sonata because they themselves create the impressions.

Christ, it is true, is "in the midst of the two or three who call upon his name," but no more than he is present under every other condition: the two or three only gather together because in such public worship they will themselves create an atmosphere which will help them to realise the divine presence more emphatically.

This issue between sacramental Catholicism and non-sacramental Protestantism involves immense issues. It involves nothing less than a different theory of life.

From the standpoint of reason, to which we are strictly confined in this book, the only manner whereby we can test whether sacramentalism is the more or the less probable theory, is to turn to such evidence as our experience of everyday life provides. Does life appear to be governed by sacramental or non-sacramental principles? At first sight we may be inclined to lean to the non-sacramental conclusion. Let us take the example of the inspiration by which the poet or composer is impelled to create his art, as being the nearest approach to the divine properties which, it is claimed, the sacraments possess. The issue becomes simply this. Are these moments of inspiration due to the artist's auto-suggestion, and to his internal mental and emotional and physical disposition? Or are these moments of inspiration due partly—not *entirely*, be it remembered—to exterior, objective influences? That is the clear issue before us.

We might well say that inspiration is always there, and that these special manifestations are due entirely to the artist, just as the landscape may always be beautiful, though when we are preoccupied we do not notice its beauty. But let us see where this conclusion leads us. It leads us to nothing else than a repudiation of the law of gradations, of degrees of perfection. It implies that not only is the mud in the gutter equally

beautiful with the snow on the mountain-top, but that there are no degrees of value between a Beethoven sonata and a cheap music-hall syncopation. For if inspiration is only occasional because of the weakness of the artist, if beauty and divinity are always and equally present everywhere, then they are as present in one form of music as another. One man is as full of the divine nature as another, one place is as full of divine beauty as another. There is no possible escape from this commitment. For, once it is admitted that there are degrees in the value of human individuals, artistic creations, or earthly landscapes, and that these degrees are not merely due to the impressions of the observer, then the sacramental principle is admitted. It is admitted that although God and his power to manifest beauty are omnipresent and eternal, yet, precisely because we recognise that there are inherent degrees of value, that some persons and things are more full of him and others less full of him, we concede that there are places and occasions when he reveals himself more emphatically than in other places and occasions.

Personally, I should unhesitatingly give as my own slight experience of artistic inspiration that this process is not entirely due to myself, that when, so far as I am concerned, I have been exactly in the receptive mood for inspiration, the theme has not come. Sometimes the theme has come when I was quite unready for it. It has all the symptoms of being a deliberately objective force.

I confess I cannot follow the absolute subjectivist. Ultimately this non-sacramental theory seems to me to deny the distinction between good and evil. There can be no degree of values. An act of destruction—like murder—becomes an evil, or less good than a creative act like the writing of a poem, only because

I happen to be unable to see the equal merit of murder. It is entirely obvious, so far as I can see, that there are degrees of value in everything, quite objective to my impression, and therefore degrees of the revelation or inspiration of God.

And when I turn to the difficulty which the non-sacramentalist feels about reconciling the sacramental principle with the principle of divine omnipresence, the reason for his difficulty seems equally obvious. He is confusing the whole with the part. When the Hindu says that God is everywhere and therefore worships a cupful of Ganges water because he says it is part of God, the answer is that it is much less of God than the entire God. When the non-Christian says that God is in the universe and therefore cannot have been more present in the Incarnate Christ than in any other man, the answer is that God gives a complete manifestation of himself in Christ, but only a fragment of himself in the spirit of other men—and that to a varying degree. When the theologians at a recent conference at Farnham say that Christ is not more present in the Communion of the Reserved Sacrament than in the services of Matins and Evensong, the same answer is implied: Christ is always revealing himself more completely and less completely, and he reveals himself completely in his Incarnation, and in the extension of the Incarnation—the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It is not simply the act of the communicant in Communion which creates the divine presence: it is the inherent fact that the Consecrated Host, for however long it is reserved, retains this direct but mysterious manifestation.

Sacraments are reflections or concentrations of the divine presence under visible form. There could be no sacraments if there were no unconcentrated, infinite, unsacramental presence. This fact is some-

times ignored by Protestants, and the misunderstanding is particularly evident in the criticisms which have been levied against Benediction and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The trend of most of this criticism is that to worship Christ in the Reserved Sacrament is to detract from his presence elsewhere.

It is extremely doubtful whether the practical effect of sacramental worship on the popular mind is to detract from a sense of divine omnipresence. The real issue, however, is whether it is true that, if Christ is present under the form of the Host, it necessarily means that he is not present elsewhere. And the answer is that he could not be present in the Tabernacle unless he were present in the whole universe. For the sacramental presence is a reflection and a focus of the infinite presence.

Life itself is sacramental. Divine inspiration comes to us always in outward forms, through nature, through the arts, through human love. In a sense we may think of these sacramental occasions as the unrolling of a curtain, so that for an instant we are, apart from any localisation, brought into the divine presence: the barriers in between are momentarily removed.

This is not an altogether imperfect analogy, for the barriers, the clouds which ordinarily hide the sun from us, are the reason for sacraments. If there were no barriers, and earth were heaven, there would be no sacraments. It is because our physical senses blind us to the divine presence, that, at times and places, the divine presence comes to us, veiled under physical form.

But, though the clouds are of human making, though it is our weakness which makes sacraments necessary, it is not we alone who dispel the clouds. To suppose this is to regard devotional religion as a matter of moods and auto-suggestion. That is the one pole, the

subjective side of the picture. The other aspect, the dispersal of the clouds, is due to an objective force outside ourselves. Nothing seems to me more certain than that in any form of inspiration there is a special influence outside ourselves at work, as well as a disposition within us. To believe in the subjective view is a half-conception, and ultimately an overestimate of our strength to remove the barriers. When an inspiration comes, it is partly, but not wholly, due to my power. There are influences outside me, and the influences are occasional rather than continual. There are times and places for the inspiring force. And therefore there are sacraments.

Nor am I impressed by the "time argument." The "time argument" is an objection which is raised by some Anglican theologians against Benediction or devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, on the ground that the sacramental presence may be withdrawn after the actual Communion service. The *onus probandi* for such withdrawal must rest on the shoulders of those who allege it, and the answer to it is that there is no positive evidence for it. If time enters in, and the presence is not coterminous with the outward species, then it may not last until the species are consumed, especially when the ablutions take place after the final benediction. It would certainly tell against Communion with the Reserved Sacrament. And it involves two miracles, the miracle of inspiration and the miracle of withdrawal.

§ 6.

One other consideration in regard to the sacraments must be mentioned here.

It is evident that if there is to be this concentrated, specialised, objective presence of Christ in the world,

as we have seen is the Catholic doctrine of the sacraments, there must be a vehicle, a tabernacle, a visible mechanism of this spiritual grace. The Protestant conception of the Church is quite consistent. It remains subjective, so that any body of believers help to make up the Church. There is no formal organisation which constitutes the Church. The Church is entirely spiritual and invisible, and what makes the Church, so far as the individual is concerned, is the individual's own faith.

But the Catholic idea of the Church must necessarily be that of a body which enshrines this sacramental presence, and therefore a body which has certain definite marks and boundaries. Against this theory, therefore, a further objection is raised. When the Catholic claims that there can be no certainty of sacrament without the machinery of episcopal or apostolic succession, the objector declares that this is hampering spiritual matters with tiresome human regulations, that it is introducing material considerations into spiritual affairs. A man ought not to need to be episcopally ordained to be able to administer the sacraments. It may be a convenient regulation, but not an essential, for, if so, it suggests a magic power bestowed on a sacerdotal caste.

This is the type of reasoning which can make a strong appeal from the street corner platform, precisely because it is loose and crude in character.

In the first place, it is a confusion of two theories. It is the application of the Protestant conception of the sacraments to Catholic machinery. It is quite evident that, if sacraments are merely memorial rites, or opportunities for gathering together, and of realising more fully than might be possible elsewhere the continual presence of Christ, no conditions of priesthood and no formal Church are necessary. Indeed,

no sacraments or services are actually necessary, though they may be convenient. A man or woman could equally celebrate and partake of Communion by himself, in his own room. It is a confusion, however, to apply the subjective principle to the machinery or ministry of the sacraments and the objective principle to the sacraments themselves.

Secondly, this impatience with the Catholic insistence upon a fixed condition, such as episcopal succession, before there can be an assurance of valid sacraments, and therefore a Church, is really the impatience which humanity naturally feels at times against any sort of law. It is the same impatience which a composer feels, on occasion, against the laws of harmony and counterpoint, or an inventor feels when he has all his properties, save one, to produce a desired result, and cannot obtain the result because the one link is missing. It is the same indignation which we each of us experience when an innocent child is injured because it enters a room and lights a match where someone has allowed gas to escape. We are apt to declare that no explosion should have been allowed because, morally, the child was not to blame. In other words, we are complaining of the intrusion of an irrevocable law into realms where we think law should be superseded by moral considerations, just as the critic of Catholicism is impatient with the principle that, however good the intentions of the worshippers, there can be no guarantee of a sacramental Church unless the conditions of law are complied with. The only answer is that law is irrevocable. There is not a single instance in the universe where law is other than irrevocable. And the Catholic theory is therefore all the more probable, because it claims that, where the laws which condition the sacraments are disregarded, there will be no sacramental result.

Finally, it will be asked whether this doctrine of episcopal succession is the actual condition in this case. Here the answer is simple. Apostolic succession is not a mysterious or magical agency, without any relation to law elsewhere. It is merely the law of continuity. If the Scriptural account is accurate, and our Lord ordained his Apostles to their ministry by bestowing on them the gift of the Holy Spirit, then nothing appears to be more certain than that only those who have received the same gift, in regular succession, from those so appointed, can possess the same powers and authority. The law of continuity is a universal law, in the hereditary, in the chemical, and in every other sphere of life. The chain of cause and result must be unbroken. We do not say a man is a descendant of some ancestor, merely because he has a moral claim to be considered one of the family. We trace his succession through the generations. In the same way the relation of any religious body to the Apostolic Church must be tested on the score of its unbroken succession. If the succession has been broken, no moral consideration can eliminate the natural consequences of such a break.

CHAPTER TWO

Doctrinal authority

§ 1.

WHEN we come to consider the question of authority, we are entering upon a field where criticism of the Catholic religion is probably more acute than anywhere else.

We must be careful to remember that here, as elsewhere, the law of polarity is still at work: that is to say, there are two aspects or methods of authority, both of which must be included if our conclusions are to be based on more than a half-truth and are not to be unproportioned.

The first of these is, again, the objective, or exterior aspect; the second is the subjective, or personal element. We will proceed to apply both of these conditions, as before, by seeing how they operate in the process of revelation concerned with matters entirely outside the theological sphere. For, fundamentally, the process is the same, and we are justified in testing the probability of the Catholic and Protestant theories strictly by that experience.

We have seen that one of the purposes for which Christ instituted his Church was that of creating a sacramental instrument on earth through which he would perpetuate his ministry to mankind. The other purpose of the Church was to be a medium of the revelation of truth which he had given to men. The sacramental or ministerial purpose has been considered first, only because it afforded a more

convenient illustration of the difference between the Catholic and Protestant standpoints.

What is the normal process by which a truth manifests itself and is established? We must remember that in any analogy which we draw between theological or philosophical truths and physical truths, there is one element in the latter which is absent in the former, and to that extent any such analogy is accordingly imperfect. It is the element of adaptability to the physical senses. If a man advances, for example, some claim regarding a cure for cancer, his claim can be tested by evidence in which the physical senses will pronounce judgment: a cancer patient is treated with the alleged cure, and the results will show whether the claim is a truth or a delusion. If, on the other hand, a theory is advanced regarding the origin of the universe, no such direct test is possible. And we must remember this difference when we draw an analogy between the process by which truth evolves in the religious and in the secular sphere.

Let us suppose, therefore, that a theory is put forward by an individual philosopher that slavery is immoral. We will further imagine that it is advanced at a time when slavery is a universal institution, and that the theory is quite original. What is the process? The actual genesis is probably due partly to inspiration, and partly to the philosopher's own mental creation: he is led to think, and he thinks. Next, he convinces a small circle of disciples, who help him to assert his claim. The third stage is the examination and eventual acceptance of the claim by the council of the State—one particular State will serve for our purpose, and the council may be taken to describe whatever body in that State is the central and supreme authority. The council enacts a law, or puts forward a formal statement, denouncing slavery. But there is

one further stage. A law or an official pronouncement is not operative until it has stood the test of public opinion. The ultimate vindication of the theory is, therefore, that the nation itself accepts the law and that the generations to follow accept the law—in other words, the test of general consent and of time.

Now there are several conditions in this process which need to be carefully noted.

The first of these is that there must be a continuity between the new claim and the beliefs which are already held by the nation. The reason for this is that the method by which other people become convinced of the claim is by an appeal to principles which they already hold. The philosopher, for instance, may base his case on the fact that man is a superior creation to the beast, and that man deserves to be given that element of freedom which slavery denies. The rights of man and the fundamental economics of labour are probably his premiss. Anyhow, there must be some premiss, some foundation of agreement, some body of traditional belief with which the new claim can make contact. This condition is merely an extension of the fact that there can be no argument, and no conclusion by argument, unless there is a common basis.

The second consideration is that, when we speak of general consent, we mean the normally intelligent consent of the public who are concerned with the principles on which the theory is founded. For example, there may be a small section of people who believe that there is no such thing as a human individual, and that therefore you cannot enslave him; or others may believe that men are inferior to horses, and should be given less freedom than horses enjoy. Obviously the consent of such people is unnecessary, precisely because of the first consideration which we have

named. It would be impossible to expect the Christian Scientists to confirm some new theory as to cancer, because they do not believe in the existence of cancer, or indeed of the physical body. This consideration is a corollary of the former condition, for it shows that there must be a continuity by which the new doctrine has evolved, a basis on which the further claim is built. Those who do not accept the basis are clearly outside the body of opinion which we imply when we speak of general consent.

In the same way we do not imply by general consent the consent of each individual in the nation. In our analogy there will be a certain number of people whose interest is concentrated so much on how to grow enough potatoes and on other small domestic concerns, that they are indifferent to such wider issues as the morality or immorality of slavery. Moreover there will be, for many generations at least, a violent opposition from the slave-owners. The majority of them may be converted, but certainly a fraction will declare that gross injustice has been done to them by the law which abolishes slavery and which, they will say, has robbed them of their just possessions. Virtually, by opposing the law, they will have cut themselves off from the community of the nation. The nation has spoken by the mouth of its legislative council, and they have dissented and seceded. General consent need not be absolute consent. It is unlikely ever to involve absolute consent. And in both cases, therefore, our experience shows that there are limitations to what we describe as the national consciousness, and that these limitations do not impair what is a deliberate national act and acquiescence.

This leads us at once to a third consideration, the consideration in which the element of polarity is involved. As we observe the process by which the

State or nation becomes convinced of the immorality of slavery, we shall notice the two poles of objectivity and subjectivity at work. Or, we might describe them as institutionalism and individualism, or authority and the private judgment. Both of these are essential to the evolution of the truth. On the one hand, the objective pole is essential, because there can be no final decision, and no outward vindication of the claim, until the collective and the official authority has accepted it. Indeed, the function of the institution goes deeper than that. Most of us have experienced the distinct mentality of a committee: a proposal which individuals have separately discussed becomes viewed from a new angle the moment these individuals meet together. And this collective element is an inherent part of the process of considering the truth. A truth does not become more true because the institution accepts it. But the acceptance of the institution is an ultimate test, and there is something suspicious in the history of a claim which has been consistently and ultimately rejected by corporate authority even after renewed and persistent efforts.

We may regard this statement from a slightly different standpoint. The necessity of the corporate institution is really the principle of confirmation. Moreover, when the claim that slavery should be abolished emerges from the individual into the corporate stage, many of its unbalanced and disproportionate features are shed. The corporate influence levels it down into the interests of ruthless normality and common sense. Often this tendency has dangers of its own, for some of the original enthusiasm may be lost and the principle may be compromised. The collective influence is necessarily conservative in character, for it is always some years behind the individual inspiration, and its primary rôle is to check

and submit the claim to dispassionate analysis. This is its peculiar value, for, when the council has pronounced against slavery, it is evident that the reform must have a strong case and a general support behind it, or otherwise so cautious a body would not have ventured to introduce so far-reaching a law. Probably the more impatient elements will declare that the reform is long overdue.

That is the one pole. But the subjective pole is equally essential. As we have seen, the original inspiration or revelation probably, in the first instance, came to a single individual. An isolated reformer, or a pioneer group, may for years have agitated for the removal of slavery before the council could be moved to action. Again, in what we have described as general consent, the minds of thousands of men and women are actively at work criticising and dissecting the proposed action of the legislative authority. The press, local debating societies, family circles and individuals, all help to make up the apparatus by which the nation ultimately assents to the abolition of slavery. Moreover, the subjective or individual aspect interpenetrates its opposite. The council itself, the very centre of the institutional system, proceeds by the arguments and the deliberation of individual minds. What else, indeed, is a corporation than a collection of individuals? The pronouncement of a council is the fruit of separate individual judgments. There will have been long wrangling debates when each member pressed forward his own point of view. The one process which we can safely affirm never has happened in human experience, is that of the "delphic oracle." As in the case of artistic inspiration, there is no known form of revelation in which the human and personal understanding is entirely subservient: the artist must actively co-operate,

and so closely do the two influences interact, that it is impossible to trace where one begins and the other ends.

§ 2.

The tendency of the Protestant theory of authority is to emphasise the subjective or personal aspect at the expense of the institutional.

The battle-cry of the Protestant Reformation against Catholic Europe was the right of private judgment, and it owed such success as it obtained to the fact that it proclaimed a truth which tended to be obscured. But it was a half-truth. Sheer individualism, whether it takes the form of the individual reason—which is rationalism—or the individual consciousness—which is Protestantism—is intellectual anarchy. Whether we like it or not, the plain fact remains that man is neither socially nor mentally a separatist entity: he must base his actions and ideas on the same collective authority. The rationalist appeals largely to the institutional collectivism of science, and the Protestant appealed to the Bible: but he maintained that each man must be left to interpret the Bible for himself.

By making the Bible the external court of appeal Protestantism committed an act of inconsistency which it is difficult to explain away. The New Testament in a canon of books which the Catholic Church, on the authority of a General Council, declared to be inspired and genuine. That authority, and no other authority, sifted the large numbers of books which were then in existence, rejected some and accepted others which now form the New Testament. Hence, the canon of the New Testament rests entirely on the judgment of the Catholic Church, and Protestantism in declaring the Bible to be its authority is implicitly

accepting, in this instance, the very authority which elsewhere it rejects. The difficulty is not avoided by arguing either that Protestants only agree with the authoritative action of the General Council in this matter because their own private judgment happens to concur with it, or that they accept the General Council because the results of this particular decision bear on them the evidence of truth. In either of these cases it would have to be shown that Protestants had re-examined the whole of the books which the Council of Carthage had to consider—an impossible task, since many of the rejected books have entirely disappeared. There seems to be no escape from the conclusion that here is a fundamental flaw in the Protestant case, since Protestants accept without question, and without any exercise of their private judgment, the canon of Scripture which the Church has selected for them.

The principle of wholesale private interpretation has resulted, as might be expected, in institutional anarchy. Protestantism now comprises a myriad of hostile sects, whose very existence testifies to the essentiality, to some degree in any case, of institutional authority. Moreover, in spite of Protestant principles, the institutional element has asserted itself in a rigid form. However strongly in theory Protestants may assert the right of private judgment, they would actively deny it in the case of any one of their followers who declared that his interpretation of the Scriptures led him to believe in Papal Infallibility, or his moral right to play games on Sundays. He would be instantly ejected from his sect. Protestantism to-day presents a very definite creed, differing only in particulars from Catholic theology. The modernist and rationalist reaction is as much a protest against Protestantism as against Catholicism: indeed, in certain respects, it is more directly in antagonism to Protestant

dogma. Modern thought, for example, is probably in a position of greater antagonism to the Protestant doctrine of verbal inspiration, to the Calvinist belief that thousands of human beings are born to be eternally damned, to Puritan sabbatarianism, or to the theory that at death man is ready to pass instantly to heaven or hell, then to the Catholic attitude on these issues. Free thought and liberal theology undoubtedly stood behind Protestantism in its anti-institutional reaction at the Reformation. But it used Protestantism only as a convenient medium, which long since it has discarded. Modernists may combine, on occasion, with Protestant Evangelicals against the Catholic institutional claims. But they are strange bed-fellows, and it is no exaggeration to say that there is no standpoint more essentially opposed to liberalism than the Protestant form of theology.

§ 3.

When we turn to the Catholic attitude towards authority we are met with the difficulty which invariably arises whenever an attempt is made to combine the two poles. In other words, the difficulty is precisely a proof of the complete nature of its truth.

There can be little doubt that, largely as an antithesis to the Protestant and liberal emphasis on freedom of thought, the tendency of Catholicism has been to insist on the objective or institutional aspect—to such an extent as to belittle the opposite pole. The orthodox Catholic expression has dwelt upon the functions of authority and has regarded the function of private judgment as almost a Protestant heresy. Before the appearance of the Reformation the Catholic balance was similarly on the objective side, chiefly because the level of popular intelligence, outside the

higher ecclesiastical circles, was poor, and therefore the faculty of general individual consent was inactive. Since the Reformation the Catholic standpoint has always been able to point to the disintegrating results of abandoning institutional authority. This, up to a certain degree, is a perfectly justifiable criticism. You cannot have complete individualism in anything without evil results. The most ardent free-thinker is bound to admit the essential place of central authority, not only in such an example as that of the abolition of slavery, but in all forms of truth, scientific, philosophical, theological and social. The plain fact is that no theory can receive the imprint of truth until it has obtained the sanction of authority. The theory, we repeat, does not become true only because authority has endorsed it: but it has no guarantee of truth until this endorsement is obtained. The original disciples of the anti-slavery doctrine know their doctrine to be true long before the State has spoken. But there can be no administrative action, no practical effect, no ultimate certainty so far as the nation is concerned, until the Council has made its pronouncement.

Even in art the same process is at work. However great is the inherent value of a composition, it is not known, it cannot take its place in history as a masterpiece, until the expert body of artistic authority has acclaimed it. To deny the necessary function of objective authority in any matter is to deny the principle of polarity. Precisely because free individual thought is one essential in the development or revelation of truth, there is certain to be the objective, teaching function.

It should be unnecessary to labour this point further, because no thinking man can fail to recognise that his own freedom is paralysed unless he can build up his own investigations and inquiry on the foundation of

what he learns from authority. Without this principle there could be no development. There would be no education. Each individual scientist would be forced to start where the cave-man started, and to begin over again all the elementary discoveries from which modern knowledge has evolved.

But there is the opposite function, and Catholic theologians have done much disservice to Catholicism so far as they have tended to belittle it. For the very system of Catholic authority is the co-operation of private judgments. As we shall see presently, this principle is affected by another consideration. But, for the moment, it is necessary only to emphasise that, on its human side, the authority of the Church is inherently the combined mental activity of the representatives of the Church, further confirmed by the mental activity which makes up the general consent of the Church. The authority of the Catholic Church is an exact application—with the further consideration we shall mention—of the principle which we have seen at work in the abolition of slavery. The Church has never spoken authoritatively and officially until she has been stirred into such action by the claim which an individual, or a group of individuals, has put forward. It may be a positive or a negative claim—such as the Arian denial of the equal Godhead of the Second Person of the Trinity. The Council of the Church examines the claim in the light of the faith once delivered to the Saints—*i.e.*, the essential continuity of truth. This examination is an exhaustive criticism in which private judgments play their full part. And even when a decision is reached, the general consent of the whole body of the Church must be in accord with the official pronouncement. Those who then secede, or were never in communion with the Church, or who do not accept the body of truth on which this

new definition is founded, do not affect the unanimity of consent any more than similar dissent regarding the anti-slavery pronouncement.

It will be more convenient to consider the question of Papal authority under the third section of this book. But, in the immediate context, it should be carefully remembered that even the most ultramontane or conservatively minded champion of the Papacy theoretically admits the absolute necessity of the subjective aspect—the collective assent of individual judgments, not only where the pronouncement has been made through General Councils, but by the Pope speaking *ex cathedra*. Any Roman Catholic theologian will assert that the Pope only speaks infallibly when he is voicing the mind of the Church. The case which is presented for such doctrines as the Immaculate Conception or Papal Infallibility is that from the earliest times this doctrine was held by a number of people within the Church, that it was freely examined and debated, and only became *de fide* when it had fulfilled this process.

§ 4.

Before we draw a final conclusion as to the issue between the Protestant and Catholic theory of authority, or as to the popular objections which are raised against the theories, we must complete our examination by slightly extending the interpretation which we have given to the polar opposites in this issue.

So far we have only expressed these opposites in the terms of the objective institution and the subjective personal judgment, and we have been able to claim a complete analogy with the manner in which any secular truth is developed. The analogy is, in a sense, however, incomplete, when we remember that the

Church claims to be inspired and to be the medium of a divine revelation. This objection will have arisen already, no doubt, in the minds of certain people. There is no similarity, they will say, between the example of the abolition of slavery and the definition of the Trinity, because the one is a natural process, and the other is supernatural.

But when we come to examine the supernatural claim more closely, we find that it is actually an extension of the same principle. The polarity here consists, as in all forms of inspiration, of the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit and the human machinery of the minds of Churchmen. It is much more a difference of degree than of kind. I should entirely deny that any truth, however secular, is due only to the one pole of human ingenuity. I believe that every inventor, every discoverer, every artist, and indeed every creator, owes the result he is able to produce to an inspiration which comes to him from without, as well as to his own activity. We are back once more at the sacramental issue. Not only is it true that the supernatural manifests itself in this world through natural forms, but it is also true that in all natural processes there is a supernatural element. I should be sorry to confess to a Christianity which believed that God had no part in the conversion of a nation to the realisation of the evils of slavery, or in the inspiration of an artist or scientist when he is at work at his craft.

If the sacramental theory is true, and natural forms are the medium of spiritual influence, it follows, as we have already seen, that there are degrees of inspiration and revelation. The utmost that any Christian can claim is that his Church is the ordained channel of divine manifestation in comparison with the "uncovenanted" inspiration of non-Christian religions.

And conversely, the fact that there are degrees makes it impossible to suppose that there is not a special revelation, more divinely inspired than any other. It is as absurd to suppose that all religions are equal as that the composer of a popular song has been as fully inspired as Beethoven. Nor is it true that the difference lies solely in the mentality of the two musicians. Even within my own narrow experience, I am aware that sometimes I am only inspired to do some minor piece of work, and sometimes to create a work which is comparatively greater: I may not succeed in the latter case as well as in the former, but I know that the latter inspiration is of an altogether higher order.

The two poles are really, therefore, the inspiration which guides the Church, and the human machinery of the minds of Churchmen, so that we have to include, as before, both the objective and the subjective aspects. No one who admits inspiration in anything can deny the reasonableness of the claim of the Church to be inspired. Nor, so far as I can see, can he escape thereby the inevitability of the institution. Indeed, the weakness of the original Protestant and the consistently permanent free-thought principle is, not only the chaos and disunity of revelation where the institutional element is absent, but also the fact that, when every man is regarded as a separate unit, and truth is supposed to evolve purely through a system of free-lance intellectualism, the value of collective confirmation is ignored.

The Catholic claim to authority is nothing less and nothing more than this. It presupposes a deposit of faith, to which all development of doctrinal interpretation and devotional application must be strictly related. It asserts that out of all religious bodies which have received a measure of inspiration, one such

body—the Catholic Church—has been specially and fully inspired—a claim which seems only controvertible if we are prepared to deny the existence of the law of gradation in nature. Finally, this development seems strictly to follow the process which apparently obtains in the development of any truth—namely, by hearing the evidence of some new theory, then by the pronouncement of the official body which represents the whole body of the Church, and, still further, by the general and permanent consent of the mind and consciousness of the whole Church. Those who criticise this process must similarly criticise the evolution of all scientific and secular knowledge.

The Catholic Church has done no more than this. The Church has never spoken officially until some further theory has become so insistent that she has been, as it were, jarred into action, and into subsequent condemnation or approval of this theory through her General Council, after the most exacting intellectual investigation. And the further test has always been that the Council has been really representative of the mind of the whole body. This is the final test that the result is a result of the spiritual guidance which was promised by Christ to his Church, and which must, of its very nature, be infallible. There is no claim to magic infallibility, as most non-Catholic critics have supposed, in the official council itself. Not the most ardent institutionalist has ever suggested that Pope or Council could suddenly announce a doctrine of which the general body of the Church had never heard or approved. It is only when the official institution acts as representative of the whole body that the inspiration of the Spirit is revealed. And this, we must repeat, is precisely the method by which truth is guaranteed elsewhere.

§ 5.

It is curious to notice how consistently the Protestant theory is commemorative. Just as the sacraments, in the Protestant conception, are memorials of events which once happened and have now ended, so, on its dogmatic side, it challenges the whole Catholic idea of a continuous development of inspiration. It does not want to develop. It looks back on the first Christian Church of apostolic days, and it aims at reproducing this order as exactly as possible, without any growth or deviation.

We may take as a suitable illustration of this attitude the Catholic doctrine of episcopal ordination. The Presbyterian Protestant claim is that the Scriptures reveal only two orders—the presbyter and deacon, and that the presbyter combined what is now claimed as the functions of bishop and of priest. Let us assume that this claim is historically correct. Even so, the Catholic theory would be that, as gradually the office of presbyter became divided, the priest cannot now do all that the bishop claims to do. The Catholic, believing that the episcopal function was there, in germ, as it were, within the office of presbyter, would claim that eventually the three orders became distinct, and that this was assented to by the mind of the whole Church, received authoritative sanction, and bears, therefore, all the marks of divine guidance and legitimate development. As late as the sixteenth century the Presbyterian stops dead and declares: "All this development has been wrong: we must go back to the first century." The answer is that, even if the Presbyterian theory as to the first century is historically correct, such a development cannot be wrong. It is a retrograde, and therefore an erroneous principle to go back and refuse to acknowledge the

growth of fifteen centuries. It is no justification to prove the Presbyterian system of the first century.

Here, indeed, we have the concise issue between progressivism and reaction. It is the difference between stagnation and vitality, and it is this which makes the Protestant theory fundamentally antagonistic to any vital ideal. It makes the Protestant and the modernist, as we have seen, very odd bed-fellows. For the Protestant conception is a challenge to the idea that the realisation and interpretation of truth, as distinct from the deposit of truth itself, is a natural law, and that all main developments, in any field of thought, are the sure indication of truth.

If an individual has neither mentally nor spiritually grown, we see in such stagnation the evidence of some strange physiological disease. We call it "arrested development." The same is true of corporate individuality. When Christ promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit "*shall* lead you into all truth," he was speaking to them through the ages. He was promising them that the Church should not die. But, if it must live, it must grow. And development is an essential consequence of growth.

If we may anticipate a conclusion for a moment, we may trace in the attitude of many Anglicans a modification of the same tendency at work. The Anglican is forced, on account of the schism of East and West, to hold that since the first six General Councils the whole official apparatus of authority became paralysed, and he is restricted, therefore, not merely to the first century, it is true, but to the centuries up to the Great Schism: nothing can have œcumenical authority since that period, and, therefore, the more stress is laid on the authority of the official machinery of the Church, the stronger is the suggestion that Anglicanism is committed to the theory of the with-

drawal of the Holy Spirit after the first few centuries. The answer for the Anglican is, as we shall see in a later context, that, though the machinery of the General Council may be dislocated and the *official* voice silenced, the guidance of the Holy Spirit is not confined to official channels. A main development of devotion or discipline which has Scriptural warrant and evidently reflects the general mind of the Church is, by its very nature, due to divine inspiration, even if the official machinery has not promulgated it. Those who are concerned chiefly as advocates of the institutional side are sometimes inclined to talk as if it were the official pronouncement which made the truth true: whereas actually the official pronouncement only takes place because the truth is true and the *unofficial* mind of the Church has recognised its truth. To take the case of what might seem to be the most extreme example of institutional dogma—when the doctrine of Papal Infallibility was defined in 1874—no Roman Catholic suggests that before 1874 the doctrine had been untrue: the difference is merely that before 1874 a Roman Catholic was not required to believe the doctrine. Both then and now, Roman Catholic theologians are concerned to show that the doctrine had Scriptural warrant, and that in previous centuries the doctrine was held by an increasing number of Churchmen. In fact, it is claimed that, when the Vatican Council issued its decree, it was voicing the general mind of the Church. In other words, the official decree is simply an endorsement or formal guarantee of the divine guidance of the mind of the Church.

There is nothing contrary to Catholic orthodoxy, therefore, in pointing to any main developments, to which the general mind of the Church has assented, as being due to divine guidance. For disciplinary

purposes, it is obviously legitimate to draw a clear distinction between such of these developments as have been officially promulgated and those which have received no official sanction. The authority of a main development of active consciousness is also a test of truth in secular thought. And even in the world of art we acknowledge the claims of a work which has obtained a wide recognition of its high value.

This criterion must not be confused with any mere appeal to the infallibility of majorities. In the electoral system the test of numbers is simply a necessary form of opportunism. The test of a main body of consciousness rests on the far deeper principle that a truth will eventually draw to itself assent, and that this assent tends to become widespread rather than esoteric. Perhaps it is more accurate to express this principle in converse form and to say that, where there is a main body of conscious assent to a doctrine, that doctrine bears on it the mark of probable truth: though, undoubtedly, there will be truths which, for various causes, have never emerged into the light of day, or become, in any sense, popular.

And there is this further principle to be remembered.

The tendency of all smaller developments of consciousness is to become disproportioned. It is the nemesis of sectarianism that the sect is much more concerned with the particular claim which distinguishes it from the gentile world outside, than with the beliefs which it holds in common with that world. We must be careful, therefore, to distinguish between what we may call main developments and partial developments, which are partial in so far as they represent the conscious assent of only a small element of believers. Ideally, this is the vindication of the Catholic claim. The Catholic Faith is not sectarian, but contains at

least in germ, and is capable of developing and interpreting to the full, all that is constructively true in other Christian and non-Christian religions. The Protestant and Catholic body of truth do not present the spectacle so much of two parallel doctrinal systems, as an incomplete and a complete system. The fundamental distinction, in fact, between Protestant and Catholic Christianity is that Protestantism accepts a certain proportion, but rejects a further proportion of Catholic truth.

One other word in this context must be added. Many critics of Catholicism will reply that Catholicism is itself incomplete and does not contain much which they believe to be true in other religions or in other systems of thought. We must re-emphasise, therefore, that the Catholic claim is not that there is a complete consciousness in the Catholic Church of the full interpretation of the body of truth which it possesses: if this were so, there would be no room for doctrinal development. The claim is simply that the Catholic Faith contains, at least in germ, the full body of essential truth, and that the Church is therefore capable of being divinely inspired to realise more and more fully the interpretations and applications of such truth. It is the truth on the objective and inspired side which is complete and not the subjective, or side of human interpretation.

§ 6.

We can now turn to various objections which may be raised against these conclusions.

The first is one which will come from those who are more directly concerned with the institutional aspect of authority. "The whole of this case," they will declare, "is hopelessly vague. The Church, on

these conditions, is no infallible guide. How is a man to tell whether a doctrine has obtained a sufficient degree of consent to be true, how is even a General Council or papal decree to be considered as confirmed, how long have we to wait before the test of time is fulfilled, where exactly are we to draw the line between the rights of institutional authority and the alleged necessity of individual judgment, how are we to distinguish how far a pronouncement is spiritually inspired or is marred by human and fallible definition?"

The answer to this is, once again, that the system of a delphic oracle, convenient as it would be, is not the process of truth. Nature never seems to lend itself to exact demarcations: in every direction, except in mathematics, absolute tests and rules are merely artificial. When the critic complains that the process of Catholic authority is too uncertain ever to be a guide, he is in reality complaining of the fundamental conditions of the universe. There is a certain type of mind which is fairly prevalent, and which is always demanding that definitions shall be given and authority shall speak with the same precision as is possible in mathematics. The answer is simply that if they want this kind of system they must go to another universe.

In every direction this absence of demarcation, this utterly anti-oracular evolution of truth, seems to persist. It is impossible to name a moment when the darkness of night ends and the light of day begins. It is frequently impossible to distinguish good and evil in the borderland which lies between these two principles. It is impossible to say where the inspiration of an artist and where his own mental creation are separately responsible. These examples could be multiplied *ad infinitum*. But, so far as we can lay down any general rule, we can say that the method by which

any truth is discovered is by a gradual and painful process, which is sufficiently vague to make definition difficult, and not by the clear-cut mathematical precision which is typical of an infallible oracle. The example of the conversion of a State to the belief that slavery is immoral is fairly typical of any revelation of truth. There may be sudden individual realisations, here and there, but, as a whole, the process is gradual. It seems to be a deliberate intention of God that the sacramental principle shall be so inherent, and human natural mental energies shall so interpenetrate the supernatural and objective influences, that, at every stage, man shall co-operate with the Holy Spirit, and that man shall not be a passive automaton leaving God to do all the work.

It is frequently convenient to cut across this order and to draw precise definitions and make exact demarcations. But when this is done such definitions and demarcations are admittedly artificial. We say that one day ends at midnight and that at 00·01 a new day begins: but it is a human invention and not a natural division. We say that, if a victim dies within a year and a day after the assault, his assailant is guilty of murder, but that, if he dies a minute later than this period, the crime is manslaughter: yet this does not correspond to any natural or moral difference. Similarly, we find it useful for authority to draw exact lines between what may be done or may not be done, or what is to be regarded as true or not necessarily regarded as true. But these lines are artificial rather than actual.

That is one half of the answer to the objection that the Catholic process which has been defined is vague. The other part of the answer is that, in spite of this apparent vagueness in the order of the universe, in spite of the fact that the polar extremes merge one into

the other, there is normally no difficulty in distinguishing. Though it is not possible to say when night ends and day begins, we do not find it difficult to tell which is night and which is day. Though there comes a degree when the principle of right crosses into the principle of wrong, we are not usually unable to appreciate what is right and what is wrong. It is only in the borderland that the difficulty occurs. It may be impossible to distinguish where a river ceases to be a river and the ocean begins, but we know perfectly well which is the Thames and which is the North Sea. And, in the same way, even though it may be difficult to define exactly where the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit is responsible and the fallible machinery of the human agency is at work, there is no doubt normally as to when the Church has spoken *ex cathedra* and when she has not. It may be impossible to point to the precise moment at which the test of time has been satisfied and general consent has been given: but there is no doubt whatever as to when these conditions have been fulfilled. The vagueness lies in the attempt at definition, and not in actual working application.

We see in this context the difference between the dispensation of the Incarnation and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. When Christ was on earth his disciples were able to hear his words with their physical ears, and St. Thomas could satisfy his doubts as to the Resurrection by physical touch, though, even in this period, Christ spoke more often through parables than in the manner of the delphic oracle. But "it was expedient that he should go away from them." Hereafter the "spirit was to guide them into all truth"—guidance suggesting a gradual process rather than an instantaneous consciousness. His voice was to be no longer physically heard, but spiritually

revealed through that vaguer and less direct system which, as we have seen, the spiritual process involves. No more was he to be visible to the physical sight: his incarnate or sacramental presence was to be hidden under the forms of bread and wine. The spiritual senses were to take the place of the physical organs. It is this difference of dispensation which Protestantism has emphasised but exaggerated. The previous order was not suddenly ended, but perpetuated in a new form. Christ is present, the Sacrifice of Calvary is perpetuated, the voice of Christ continues to be heard: but not as it was during that one historic period.

The desire for an oracle, and impatience with any order which is not capable of precise definition, is a distinct characteristic of a certain type of mind. It is a characteristic which, within limits, must not be ignored. The Catholic Church has always met this need, and her creeds and codes and official sanctions are an inherent part of her system. But it is easy for this kind of mentality to push the institutional aspect of authority too far, and it is significant that the Church seems almost to have been reluctant to make official pronouncements. Her creeds are very few, her definitions have been studiously restricted. And, if from this class of opinion, any objection is felt to what has been written in these pages, we require only to reiterate this conclusion: a truth does not become true because the Church proclaims it. It was always true, and the Church only proclaims it because it is true. The Church cannot create truth: she is merely the medium for expounding it. It is this which the extreme institutionalist needs always to bear in mind.

§ 7.

The second objection comes from an entirely different quarter.

We may define it as a doubt as to the value of what we have called the main developments of consciousness. "You have assumed too readily," this class of critic will say, "that such developments are infallible." Frequently in history such movements have accepted theories which had subsequently to be abandoned. In the Church herself there have been the same failures, practices and beliefs which have become general have subsequently been exposed as abuses or superstitions. The sale of indulgences will serve as an example. Does not this render the "general movement" test quite untrustworthy?

There are many answers to this objection. The chief answer is that, once again, an absolute rule as to a general body of assent cannot be made. A belief or practice which has received the imprimatur of the official council is much more reliable than a development which has never been officially ratified. One simple reason for this is that the official ratification involves the employment of critical examination, rather than mere passive acceptance.

In fact, therein lies the test which will be a sufficient answer to the objection. The more a general development shows itself to have been the result of active and critical consent, the more likely it is to be true. The more it can be shown to be the result of mere unquestioning acquiescence, the less reliable does it become. The abuses and popular superstitions which have crept into the Church at various times, however general they have become, will be found to belong to the latter class of development. In fact, the term "general consent" implies only active and critical

consent. Consciousness is much more than a passive quality. It is a positive faculty, to be clearly distinguished from mere acquiescence.

We are guilty of no fanciful ideal in appealing to the test of main, active bodies of consent. If main developments are not reliable, human thought is largely paralysed. It is this implication which Protestant and rationalist appear to fail to appreciate. The Protestant assumes that for some thousand years the whole of Christendom went off on to wrong lines: the rationalist assumes that the belief of mankind was bred in error and has mainly developed in error ever since. All we can say in the face of this tremendous indictment of humanity is that, if man has been so fundamentally at fault, it makes us extremely doubtful if he will ever be other than at fault. He becomes a wholly gullible guide, incapable of decision or investigation. For, consider the rationalist implication. With the exception of individual sceptics, the mass of human thought has not only accepted, in its primitive ignorance, the story of theology, but has confirmed and elaborated its theology at various stages of its development. At each issue which has arisen, the main body of Western assent has been given in the Catholic direction—in fact, Catholicism ultimately stands for this main body of European belief.

Rationalist criticism is no doubt useful in helping to disclose the mistakes and misproportions under which all humanly defined belief labours. But that seems to be the limit of its value. It is vitiated by this impossible denunciation of mankind. If it is true that main developments can be wholly false, if it is possible that man has been deluded in his consciousness that there is a world or a solar system, and the whole structure of his scientific conclusions are, together with his religion, a mass of delusion, then we

can think and investigate no further. We have no basis on which to act. Mankind should retire into a universal lunatic asylum.

§ 8.

A far larger body of opinion, however, would criticise Catholic dogmatism from yet another angle.

To a vast number of men and women the Catholic Church stands for the most intolerant and most dogmatic system of religion which, next perhaps to Mohammedanism, the world has known. The explanation which is offered here of the process by which Catholic doctrine has been evolved will not affect the impression they already possess, of a giant institution which is the antithesis to all liberty of thought and free judgment.

When we come to analyse this objection, we find that it is directed towards the manner in which the Church has proclaimed her doctrine, rather than towards the doctrine itself. The criticism of non-Catholic mankind is directed, therefore, against the human and not the divine nature of the Church: it is not so much because the Church says, "My faith is true," but because she adds, "If you do not believe this, you are damned, and I shall do my best to see that my faith is forced upon you."

It is upon the human element that the criticism turns, and it is evident, accordingly, that this is no indictment of Catholic truth itself. Popular opinion has never sufficiently grasped the fact that the Church claims no infallibility for her human machinery *per se*, and certainly no impeccability: it is the truth which is infallible rather than the human presentation of it. But this can be no excuse for minimising the appalling record which Christian history reveals. When every

excuse has been accepted for the intolerance of past ages, for the responsibility of the State, and for the belief that to cause suffering and death to the body might save the soul, the balance remains heavily against the human policy of the Church. It is doubtful if any human cruelty has exceeded the torture of the Inquisition, where men were racked and subjected to devices of diabolical ingenuity—in the name of Christ! Anglican and non-Catholic bodies have by no means a clean sheet, but there seems to be no escape from the conclusion that Roman Catholicism has been a far worse offender, and it is unfortunate that English Roman Catholics should so often choose the persecution of the Elizabethan martyrs as the popular ground of their complaint against Anglicans. Cruel and brutal as was this persecution, it numbered far fewer victims than the toll of the stake during the three years of the Marian horrors. Moreover, it is not only in an age of persecution that the Catholic Church has followed the policy of intolerance. In every country where Roman Catholic influence is supreme, the same refusal to allow religious freedom manifests itself. In Spain, Austria, Italy, and in England each time that Roman Catholicism mounted the throne, the same policy of suppression has been pursued. When a Liberal Government some years ago refused to allow the Roman Catholic Eucharistic Congress to hold an outdoor procession of the Host in Westminster, several Roman Catholics protested. A Protestant controversialist retorted in *The Times* by asking how Roman Catholics could consistently object to this refusal when, at the same moment, the Roman Catholic State in Spain, with the concurrence of the Church, was similarly prohibiting Protestant ceremonies. Father Bernard Vaughan replied by saying that the Church of Rome did not profess

religious tolerance, but that the British Government did, and that the Roman Catholic objection was logically directed against the infringement of this toleration.

This extremely able answer raises many considerations. The official Roman Catholic attitude bases its case, quite consistently, on the argument that a Church which knows itself to be the true Church cannot permit the free exposition of heretical error: though the crude weapon of torture and burning may be laid aside, a policy of repression must be maintained, whenever necessary.

It is not altogether easy to disentangle the principles which should guide us in this issue. On the one hand, there can be no doubt, as even the most ardent freethinker will admit, that error cannot be allowed absolute freedom. If a male sect were to establish itself which preached the duty of murdering women, no rationalist would deny that it would have to be forcibly repressed in the public interest. And this principle can be logically extended, since, comparatively speaking, the spread of anything which is admittedly error must be harmful. On the other hand, there are two opposite factors to be remembered. The first is that, even from the Catholic standpoint, all main bodies of religious thought possess some degree of truth. The second is that, if they are insufficiently true, or contain a degree of error, truth will not lose by meeting them on equal terms. Under normal circumstances truth has everything to gain, and nothing to lose, by free inquiry and by free competition. Intolerance and forcible repression are in themselves so vitally evil that it is difficult to imagine any excuse for them, however laudable the purpose.

The type of objection which we are considering has, unfortunately, in spite of popular misrepresentations

and exaggerations, a clear historical justification: the Catholic record contains some very ugly chapters. Where the objection is unjustified is in its conclusions. It is a failure to distinguish between the Catholic Faith and the Catholic personnel. We must admit it seems to have been the deliberate intention of God to allow men of narrow and often cruel mentality to occupy the positions of authority in the Church. Even to-day there can be no doubt, as a whole, that the average of professing Christians represents a lower mental development than that of the sceptics and indifferent. In every age the clever man, and often the good man, has been the heretic. There have been times when the Church has seemed almost denuded of effective intellectual rejoinder.

The non-Catholic will triumphantly reply that this is an admission that man only accepts religion when he is in an undeveloped state. The true answer, however, as we have previously seen, is that what intellectual development is popularly understood to mean is the development of reason and the consequent under-development of spiritual consciousness. We shall consider this again in the next chapter. But we may turn, before we draw our immediate conclusions, to a somewhat similar argument which is often used—namely, that if the Catholic religion were true it would have expressed itself, whatever the human machinery, in a more enlightened and generous manner: it would have purified the minds of its adherents and influenced them to good.*

Few arguments are more superficially convincing or more fundamentally fallacious. We shall see this if we take the corresponding example of an artist. A pianist is an ideal performer of the art of Beethoven.

* This argument is used effectively by Mr. Arnold Lunn in his *Roman Converts*.

No one will deny that the art of Beethoven, like religious truth, is a spiritual quality, and they might suppose that anyone, who, like the pianist, is constantly in touch with so divine an influence, would be purified by the contact. Yet, as a matter of experience, the pianist may be cruel to his wife, full of vice, ungenerous and untruthful: many artists have been conspicuous human failures. But the argument involves us further: it commits us to the impossible conclusion that because this pianist and, we will suppose, the majority of artists are morally imperfect, the art of Beethoven, or whatever the art they present, is itself unspiritual and unlovely. Could any greater *reductio ad absurdum* be imagined?

There is no escape from that conclusion for those who say that the Catholic religion is condemned because it has failed to purify its bigots and tyrants. What we do in the case of art is to distinguish carefully between the art and the artist. And, further, we confirm our belief in the spiritual quality of the art because we see that countless men and women have been inspired and ennobled by its influence. The same test, and only the same test must apply to the Catholic religion. It is true that, on the sacramental principle, the presentation of Catholic truth has been committed to men, many of whom in all ages have prostituted it in the record of history. There could be no automatic influence upon them, no dislocation of their free will, without a total overthrow of the sacramental principle. The Church on earth was to be a Church of men. And therefore it was to reflect their errors and their failures. The conclusion is rather that, in spite of the constant intellectual poverty of Churchmen, of the appalling crimes of cruelty and intolerance, of the mistakes and failures and shortcomings, the Church has remained. The Faith has

been greater than the Churchmen. With all the betrayals from within and the buffets from without, its light has shone down the ages undiminished, and the Church has justified her claim to infallibility.

And there is the other side of the picture. Just as we vindicate our belief in the beauty of art by its positive effect on some of its disciples, so the Catholic religion can point to its saints in all ages and races, to the men and women in every station of life to whom the Church has proved an inspiration for noble deeds and acts of heroism and self-sacrifice. He would be a blind historian of human experience who refused to admit the magnetic influence of religion. St. Francis of Assisi is not the only example. Under persecution and the stress of life, in poverty and disease, the Catholic Faith has bred its heroes. The test which we apply to art is triumphant in its vindication of religion.

No influence which claims to be spiritual is condemned because it has failed to prevent even a majority of failures. It is justified, however small the minority of its successes.

CHAPTER THREE

The function of faith and the end of man

§ 1.

WE have not exhausted the grounds of objection which the popular thought of to-day raises against Catholic doctrine. Indeed, the main reason, probably, why men, as a whole, refuse to associate themselves with the Catholic Church, or with any religious institution, has not yet been mentioned. This arises neither because the doctrine itself is incredible, nor because the Church is intolerant in her method of presenting the doctrine. The difficulty which most men feel is that they are asked to make an act of faith, which means apparently that they are asked to accept as true a number of vital statements, for which they have no evidence, and for which there never can be any evidence.

If we could analyse the mind of the average man of to-day, we should find, I believe, this difficulty to be paramount. The Catholic religion is made up of a number of tremendous assertions—the assertion that there is a God, that God became man and rose from the dead, that God directly approaches man through the sacraments, that there is an existence hereafter, the fruits of which we decide in this life. The average man feels that these things may or may not be true. He has no possible means of knowing. But he feels that he cannot commit himself to a Church which says

that he must absolutely accept on faith these immense claims.

On no subject has more confusion arisen than on the subject of faith, and on no subject, therefore, is a clear explanation more essential.

There is no virtue in merely blind credulity. When we consider the variety of rival religious claims, the most uncritical mind will recognise some need for discrimination. If sheer acceptance and blind faith in themselves were commendable, we should be guilty of error in rejecting the claims of any charlatan who happened to cross our path. Unfortunately, however, the Catholic religion is sometimes presented in a manner which gives rise to the impression that the virtue of faith is precisely this type of passive unquestioning acquiescence. Popular opinion regards Catholicism as a vast system of auto-suggestion, and there can be little doubt that a considerable number of less intelligent Catholics accept their religion, and are praised by Churchmen for accepting their religion, very much on these grounds. "I need a religion," says this type of person, "and the Catholic religion will suit me better than any other. I shall therefore agree to believe whatever the Church tells me to believe. I shall have no kind of intellectual difficulties about that, because I shall never bother to think."

It may, no doubt, be true that for primitive forms of mentality this cruder form of credulity is unharmful. People will believe something: very few human beings can remain wholly sceptical. And, if the Catholic religion is true, or even if it is supposed only to contain truths, it is very much better that people should believe what is true, however poor may be the reasons for their belief. The point, however, which needs to be emphasised is that this is not at all what faith means, and nothing is more important, in view of current

opinion, than to dissociate the Catholic religion from any implication with this conception.

We shall, perhaps, appreciate the distinction more readily if we remember that, like sacramental reception, faith requires the active co-operation of the believer as well as the objective gift which enables him to believe. There is little action required in mere credulity. When I decide to accept as true whatever my doctor assures me is the diagnosis of my pains, nothing is easier. There is no virtue, and the least possible amount of activity on my part, in such acceptance.

But faith, in the sense which the Catholic religion implies, is a series of acts. In the first place, the ideal convert satisfies himself that the Church is a reliable guide before he knocks at her doors. He examines, in the light of his own judgment, so far as he is able, her claims and the alleged reasonableness of her doctrines. Every Catholic book of instruction which has ever been published attempts to give evidence for the truth of the doctrines it embodies, and is therefore an appeal to the reason of the reader. Still further is his faith an exercise of what we have described as the faculty of consciousness. Indeed, it is this consciousness which the objective influence directly affects. A gift of faith is really a supernatural intuition, a sudden realisation that the Catholic religion is true, a conviction which becomes overwhelmingly complete and immutable.

This experience is necessarily personal, so personal, indeed, that it cannot be communicated by the subject to any other person. The outside observer will be left free to object that this experience may be delusion. It is only the subject himself who knows that it is not delusion. The evidence which distinguishes it from delusion must necessarily be of a secondary character.

I become suddenly aware of the beauty of Wagner's music, and I am certain, beyond all doubt, that this impression is not created merely by my imagination. But I cannot convince the man to whom the gift of musical appreciation has not been given. I can merely point out to him two significant facts: first that thousands of other people have been similarly convinced of the quality of Wagnerian music, and, secondly, that my impression has not been temporary, but is reinforced by a continuously confirmatory and expanding consciousness, so that I am always discovering fresh beauties in hitherto unnoticed passages. Delusion, on the other hand, tends both to be exceptional or unique, and also to be temporary and changeable rather than continuous or expansive. A madman usually suffers from lapses into sanity, while delirium is the reverse of stable experience. If I am deluded into supposing that someone beside myself is present in a dark room, it is probable that, when I turn on the light, my belief will disappear. If, however, there is actually another occupant, I shall be reminded of his presence when I enter the room, even though my mind is entirely concentrated on other matters. In fact, the reality is distinguished from the delusion by the fact that the former is objective to my mind and is shown to be independent of my imagination, while the latter depends entirely on the state of my imagination.

The ultimate proof of the Catholic religion rests on this common experience of millions of men and women. And to the individual the recurrent spiritual experience is found to be of exactly that continuous and stable and objective nature which distinguishes it from delusion. At every point the man who lives the Catholic life will find an expanding realisation of truths which have hitherto lain outside his imagination. This is not faith: but it is a valuable confirmation of

the faith which he exercised when he decided to link himself to this body of experience and authority.

The more I am brought into contact with modern scepticism and criticism, the more I appreciate that there is a fundamental difference between us. The sceptic accepts no other criterion than reason; he does not believe in the existence of this faculty of consciousness. And that, so far as I am concerned, is the damning indictment of the rationalist outlook. For, in my opinion, few facts are more evident than that this faculty of intuitive consciousness exists and that it is reliable. As we saw in the preliminary chapter, the basis of all thought is the reality of our own existence, and this conclusion is supplied entirely by the consciousness. So far as my experience goes, life is a process of expanding consciousness, in which reason plays a valuable but secondary part. Reason checks, confirms, or rejects, but it makes very few discoveries, outside certain narrow boundaries. It is the intuitive consciousness which is the primary cause of our convictions.

§ 2.

The Catholic religion is criticised from a curiously different angle by the occult school of thought, which is chiefly represented by Hinduism and Theosophy. This criticism is really that the Church teaches too little rather than too much. Her revelation is concentrated on what it is necessary for man to know and to believe in this immediate existence, and hardly anything is asserted as to his past or his future.

Theosophy presents an elaborate and high dogmatic exposition of conditions before and after physical death, besides a number of other secrets of the universe. These statements may be true, or contain truth.

But, as has already been suggested, it is not difficult to see why the Church has excluded from the truths "necessary to salvation" this field of knowledge. For the average general of mankind, as indeed past history has shown, occult investigation has peculiar dangers of its own.

The Catholic religion, however, encounters some popular objection even in its extremely limited doctrine. The difficulty of survival after death we have already considered. There remain the difficulties of purgatory and hell.

The doctrine of purgatory need not detain us. If the survival of personality, and any scheme whatever of consequence, and good and evil, is admitted, it is clear that a state of preparation or cleansing is necessary before any more ultimate condition is reached. Protestantism seems to have blundered badly here. If man, at the moment of his death, is fit to enter heaven, his transformation must be so complete that his salvation is almost automatic, his free will is annihilated, and the change is so sudden as to be a metamorphosis, rather than a continuity of individuality.

But the doctrine of hell is open to deeper controversy. Much of the difficulty is due to the attempt to describe in human language a condition which must, in any case, lie so entirely outside the range of human imagination that any definition must be misleading and inaccurate. The crude idea of realistic fires and physical torment is an extreme example of this tendency. We can only say that, whatever the ultimate destiny of man, no human definition is likely to comprehend it.

Only the general principle remains. Can man shut himself finally off from redemption? Is this compatible with belief in an all-merciful God? The answer is that if this condition cannot exist it means

that man's free will becomes ultimately inoperative. It means that, even if man desires evil, he is finally compelled to become good. The objection to hell, on the score of belief in the love of God, is really an objection to free will. If God cannot allow man to choose hell, without a loss of justice, then it is similarly unjust to allow him to suffer the lesser and more immediate hells which are also created by his free choice.

Speculations as to the nature of hell or heaven, the nature of individuality in its final stage, the question of what determines whether a man goes to heaven or hell, and all such problems, are useless and indeed harmful. The Church has wisely refused to commit herself. Churchmen, in the past, have been less wise, and the pictures of heaven and hell, and purgatory also, which small minds have drawn, have done much disservice to the Catholic religion.

PART THREE

THE CASE FOR ANGLICAN CATHOLICISM

CHAPTER ONE

The English Church since the Reformation

§ 1.

WE enter now into a narrower arena. The fundamental issues which divide theism from agnosticism, or Catholicism from non-sacramentalism, have a width and importance which entirely differentiate them from the controversies between the Anglo-Catholic Movement and its critics. Probably it is only the smaller type of mind which prefers to interest itself exclusively in this arena. On the other hand, details must not be ignored, and we must apply in the final details the principles, which we have outlined, to the claims of religion in England. Our contention is that, just as among theistic religions one body of religious belief and consciousness has been specially inspired and guided, so the thread of this Catholic tradition can be disentangled from the confusion of English historical incidents. Accordingly the direction of the criticism which we shall encounter changes. We shall meet objections chiefly from Roman Catholic and from certain Anglican quarters. For we have come to narrow down our investigation to the claims of the Catholic Movement in the Church of England.

Before we enter into any detail, however, it will be well to tell the story of the Church of England in outline, endeavouring to avoid, as far as possible,

controversial assertions, in order to appreciate the conditions in which the claim now under our consideration arises. Before the Reformation there is little ground for dispute, either from the Roman Catholic or Anglican side. There was only one body claiming to be the Church in England, and this Communion was in full communion with the See of Rome and therefore with the rest of the Western Church. We need not trouble about the relationship of the earlier Celtic Church to the Holy See, for this does not arise in the present context.

There are evidences of occasional protest in the pre-Reformation Church against the apparent encroachments of Papal authority. But though, on the one side, these protests may be explained as in the nature of those petty frictions which arise in any form of administration, and, on the other, may be presented as evidence of a consistently anti-papal tendency, the principle of Papal authority was not authoritatively challenged until the Reformation, when the English Church found herself involved in a repudiation of that authority by reason of the action of the Crown. A complete breach was effected, but at first this involved little doctrinal change. The breach was healed for a few years during the reign of Mary, but re-created at the accession of Elizabeth. There is no doubt that at this point the schism might finally have been avoided if both sides had been more diplomatic. But, on the Anglican side, a new factor had meanwhile entered in—namely, the stream of Protestant opinion from the Continent—while, on the Papal side, the Spanish Armada was a blunder of policy which still has its effect on the English mind. The fact that the Pope officially blessed the attempted Spanish conquest of England, and that priests said Mass daily on board each of the Spanish ships for the intention of the

conquest of England, identified the Papal cause in the English mind with foreign and anti-English interests, and immensely hardened the nationalist instincts of the English Church. The Roman Catholics in England became a small and much persecuted body, while the Church of England pursued her own separate way, cut off from all formal communion with the rest of the Catholic Church.

She now included two distinct schools of thought. The first was the High Church School, which represented more nearly the pre-Reformation doctrinal standpoint; and the other was the Low Church party, which stood for the new Protestant ideas which had come from Germany and Geneva. The official Anglican standpoint became, therefore, a carefully poised compromise which was deliberately designed to include both the more Catholic and the more Protestant views. The English Church preserved episcopacy and a large measure of sacramental doctrine. But she reacted to a considerable degree from Catholic ritual and practice. She excluded all devotion to Mary and the saints from her formularies, she replaced wooden for stone altars so as to abandon any emphasis upon the sacrificial aspect of the Mass, she eliminated vast quantities of Catholic liturgy, she allowed her clergy to marry, and in numbers of other ways separated herself to a qualified extent from the tradition of the rest of the Western Church.

The High Church element subsequently became almost entirely eclipsed by the schism of the Nonjurors, who went out from the Establishment on account of the oath of allegiance, which they had taken to King James II., and which they would not transfer to his *de facto* successor. The Church of England was then handed over to the Protestant or Low Church element, although no further changes were made in

her official formularies. The consequence was a period of spiritual stagnation which is a poor recommendation to the influence of the Protestant system. The sacraments were hardly ever administered, the churches became hideous in outward appearance, the clergy sank into a state of ecclesiastical stupor—many bishops and priests hardly ever entering the dioceses or parishes to which they were nominally assigned. The Church, which had entered at the Reformation into a form of partnership with the State, on professed equal terms, now became a civil servant. Her convocations were silenced, and her final court of appeal became a purely secular tribunal known as the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The laity had equally sunk into a condition of entire religious lethargy; on Easter Day, 1800, the total number of communicants in St. Paul's cathedral amounted to six. By the beginning of the nineteenth century men were openly foretelling the speedy extinction of the Church of England, and Dr. Arnold recommended the substitution of a non-doctrinal Church which should include all religions.

§ 2.

By this time it would not have been difficult for an observer to diagnose the condition of the Church of England. The human impression would have been that she had severed herself from the Catholic Church, that she had obviously ceased to possess the sacramental life, and that she was not to be saved from consequent stagnation and death by the extra-sacramental vitality which inspired many of the other Protestant bodies. But then a remarkable change began to occur. After a spiritual revival on Low Church or Evangelical lines, there began to evolve what is known as the Oxford

or Tractarian Movement. At first this was confined strictly to a doctrinal basis, but later it enlarged into a restoration of many of the Catholic ceremonies and practices which had been discarded. Little centres began to appear where more and more of the older Catholic order was reinstated. A storm of opposition was awakened. The Bishops, the State with its legal machinery, and public opinion, were united in an attempt to suppress this revival. The defeat of the Movement seemed certain. Many of its promoters deserted it and joined the Roman Catholic Church. But the immense forces arrayed against it were gradually beaten all along the line. The Movement not only persisted, and developed, and spread, but began to influence the whole of the Church of England. The official standard of Anglican cathedrals and parish churches was levelled up to what a few years before would have been considered a dangerously High Church standard. Anglicanism gained a new spiritual energy. Anglican authority, in fact, began to adopt the very doctrines and practices which previously it had condemned and prosecuted.

By the end of the Great War in 1918 a new period may be calculated. It was openly said that the Catholic Movement had run its full course and fulfilled its purpose. But once again the prophets were falsified. Inspired by the Anglo-Catholic Congresses of 1920 and 1923, the Movement adopted a new offensive, which had two important results. For the first time it secured a measure of official Anglican recognition, in place of a benevolent neutrality, which was itself a substitute for the earlier episcopal opposition. And it also effected a further recovery of Catholic practice and devotion, so that in some English parishes to-day there are to be found the same degree of Catholic privileges as exist in any Roman Catholic church.

We are not as yet considering the criticism that these are not genuine Catholic ministrations. We are only pointing to the fact that in certain centres the Movement has reached the same standard as exists elsewhere in the Western Church—confession as a regular and normal observance, daily Mass, the Reserved Sacrament, Benediction or Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary, Requiem Masses, and the many other practices which are part of the Catholic order.

§ 3.

This historical outline will now enable us to consider what justification exists for this Movement within the English Church. As has already been said, the main criticism against it arises from Roman Catholic and Anglican sources. We will first consider the Roman Catholic objections.

CHAPTER TWO

Roman Catholic criticism of the Movement

§ 1.

THE Roman Catholic case against Anglican Catholicism may be divided into two parts—namely, into historical and immediate objections. The historical objection consists of two main criticisms: the first that the English Church at the Reformation failed to preserve the episcopal succession, which, as we have seen, is the essential form or machinery for the sacramental grace; and the second that, even if the actual continuity had been maintained, the Anglican form of ordination was insufficient to confer a valid, sacrificial priesthood.

Into neither of these criticisms need we enter at any length. In regard to the first, discussion on both sides has been exhaustively undertaken, and the references to Anglican and Roman Catholic literature alone would occupy more pages than this brief treatise could contain. Only one significant piece of evidence may be mentioned—namely, the fact that the English Church was at such pains to preserve the succession that presumably it was at least her intention to do so. On the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne, the difficulty of finding three bishops for the consecration of Parker was so acute that it is here that Roman Catholic controversy on this score has recognised the critical moment. Nothing would have been easier

than for the English Church to have followed the procedure of other "reformed" bodies and to have taken no trouble to search for willing but valid consecrators. Why, indeed, should she have been at such pains, at least, to pretend to have secured the necessary agents, particularly as it must have been easier for contemporary investigators to expose the invalidity of the episcopal title of the consecrating bishops than is possible at a subsequent period? This consideration is not in itself conclusive, but it is significant so far as the *intention* of the Anglican Church is concerned.

Discussion as to the second of the historical criticisms is impossible unless there is some common agreement as to the authority which can decide what constitutes a valid and an invalid ordinal. No conclusion can be reached on this score between a Roman Catholic who argues that Anglican Orders are invalid because the Pope has said so, and an Anglo-Catholic who does not regard that statement as an infallible pronouncement. So far as the theoretical approach to this question is concerned, we should have, therefore, to enter into a careful examination of the claims of authority before we could begin to draw conclusions, and that again is a subject too large to be introduced into these pages. On the question of authority it should, however, be mentioned that, whereas up to a few years ago both the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches refused to admit the validity of Anglican Orders, most of the heads of the Eastern Churches have recently recognised their validity, and friendly relations have matured so rapidly that the possibility of actual reunion has begun to appear on the horizon. While this does not, of course, concern the Roman Catholic attitude, the case for Anglican Orders has thereby been affected, in so far as the Anglican claim is no longer one in which only the claimant believes.

But, while deliberately passing by, for reasons already stated, the theoretical considerations arising in regard to this question, it is open to us to investigate what may be described as the practical aspect. The proof of any theory must be tested to some extent by practical evidence, where such is available. And, though we must proceed carefully in any assumption as to the practical and visible effect of such spiritual properties as the sacraments, we are able, to some extent, to recognise the visible results which follow where the sacramental life has admittedly ceased to exist. Where, as in the case of Protestant Nonconformist bodies, the Catholic conception of sacraments becomes dethroned, the sacramental rites become commemorative and subjective in nature, and are rarely used, preaching and other non-sacramental forms of worship predominate, and there is a marked absence of that particular type of vitality which the Catholic regards as one sign of the presence of the Church. The condition into which the Church of England fell during the eighteenth century is almost exactly the condition which we should expect to arise as a result of the cessation of sacraments. Nothing, from a Catholic standpoint, would have been clearer than to assume that the machinery of the Anglican ordinal had failed to preserve the sacramental succession. The Church of England seemed to have become entirely a Protestant body, without the right to claim, or the desire to claim, any sacramental vitality.

We must remember, in passing, that, even from a Roman Catholic standpoint, it would have been quite possible for the English Church to have retained her full sacramental machinery and yet to have ceased to be part of the Catholic Church. From the Roman Catholic standpoint, this is the position which the Eastern Orthodox Churches have maintained since

the schism. The two questions are therefore quite distinct, and we are, at the moment, only considering whether there is any practical evidence that Anglican Orders are valid.

There was apparently no such visible evidence in the eighteenth century. But then a remarkable change occurred. As we have seen, in spite of humanly invincible opposition, the Catholic Revival began to take root and to spread. In those Anglican churches where the fullest measure of Catholic doctrine and practice has been recovered there have begun to appear those symptoms of spiritual life to which a Roman Catholic looks as the visible evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in his Church—the vocations to the religious life and the priesthood, the frequent communions, the atmosphere of devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, the increase of regular confessions, the love of our Lady and the saints—and these symptoms, we must repeat, in spite of apparently insurmountable obstacles. The revival of the religious life may be taken especially into consideration, since, to the Catholic, this is the supreme vocation to which a man or woman may be called: the monk or nun literally forsakes all to follow the Master. The continuous stream of vocations to the religious orders through all the centuries of their existence is one of the strongest visible proofs of the vitality of the Catholic Church, and it is interesting, therefore, to trace the progress of Anglican religious life. Even where a well-known Benedictine community appeared to have ended its existence as an Anglican body some years ago, the same evidence of recovery persists. The remnant were not overcome by the storm of secessions, but have enlarged and strengthened their position. The apparent death of the plant was followed by its recovery.

It is impossible altogether to ignore this evidence of Catholic recovery in regard to the claim which we are considering. If I see a man who is apparently dead come to life again and show signs of activity, I presume that he never actually died. And the weakness of the case against Anglican Orders seems to me to be that it fails to explain this amazing degree of Anglican recovery. If such recovery, and the degree of spiritual life which is evident in an increasing number of Anglican circles to-day, is possible without sacraments, one is tempted to reply that the difference between valid and invalid sacraments is negligible. This may not be a wholly justifiable conclusion, because it would be inaccurate to place an entire reliance on the visible effect of spiritual grace. But the position does, to some extent, resemble that of a conference gravely considering whether a particular material is capable of conducting an electric current; while, outside the room where the conference is sitting, the material is all the time emitting electric sparks.

§ 2.

But the historical controversy need not delay us further. For the fundamental issue between the Anglican and Roman positions is not concerned with that aspect. If Rome admitted the validity of Anglican Orders to-morrow, she would be no nearer the admission that the English Church is part of the Catholic Church. Anglican Orders are not the difficulty. Indeed, if every other obstacle to reunion were removed, there would be several solutions to that particular problem. The co-operation of an Orthodox bishop in all future Anglican consecrations, or conditional reordination, for example, suggest themselves as obvious possibilities. And, if doubt as to the validity of Orders

alone stood in the way, the recent Lambeth Conference went so far as to suggest that Anglicans might even be prepared, in the supreme cause of Christian unity, to accept unconditional ordination.

Moreover, in any question of reunion or reconciliation, the issue between Rome and Canterbury would not turn so much on what had been claimed in the past, as on what is claimed now. The question would be what the parties concerned at the present moment were prepared to admit or to surrender. It is quite conceivable that two corporate bodies might unite without calling on each other to state whether the historical position of either had been right or wrong. The immediate attitude is what would count. And accordingly, the Roman Catholic critics of the Anglican Catholic Movement have clearly seen that the real issue is that of the Papal claims, both in regard to the dogma of Papal Infallibility and to the assertion that no Communion can be Catholic which is separate from, or refuses to admit the primacy of, the Holy See.

The difference between the Anglican and the Roman conception of the Church is that the Roman Catholic doctrine unchurches the whole of the Eastern Orthodox Communions. This is an immense proposition, for, setting the value of the Eastern Churches at their lowest, their doctrinal and sacramental continuity in the teeth of centuries of persecution and isolation hardly suggests that they are completely outside the Catholic fold. Yet, once more, this question is unnecessary to discuss, for it leads us back to the historical field. Indeed, even if we were prepared to admit that the West shows signs of being the main body of Catholic life and consciousness, and that Rome is the centre of the Church, the difference between saying that the Church is confined to the Roman Communion, and of saying that she includes the Eastern and Anglican

Communions, might be described as a difference of geographical terminology, since it would be a question of fixing boundaries and of saying where, among these extending circles of sacramental communions, the boundaries of the Church proper began and ended.

But, however we describe the difference of the two conceptions of the Catholic Church, we need only, in our present inquiry, pause for a moment to compare the probabilities of both from the same practical standpoint. And we see that, whereas the Roman Catholic theory has the advantage of presenting a Church which is organically one, it has the disadvantage of de-Catholicising the great Eastern Churches, even though it admits the validity of Eastern Orders. The Orthodox Communion has undoubtedly suffered in many ways from separation with the West. But if the imperfections of that Communion are to be taken as evidence of its separation from the Catholic Church, there could also be levied a similar argument against the Roman Catholic Communion—the disintegration which occurred, for instance, when rival claimants to the Papacy excommunicated one another, the unfortunate association of the Vatican with secular politics, the maladministration of the Papal States, the limitation of the Papal Succession to Italian prelates, or the apparently obscurantist attitude of the Papacy, on several occasions, towards scientific inquiry and intellectual thought. Such indictments are relevant only so far as they show that, as between East and West, the East cannot be charged with a monopoly of imperfection, and that we must not apply these tests in one direction only.

§ 3.

The fundamental issue, must, however, be the Papal claims and the extent, if at all, to which Anglican Catholicism is prepared to accept them.

We have continually in these pages laid stress on the fact that, as a living and inspired body, the Catholic Church is likely to reveal developments of the interpretation of the Faith, and of devotion and practice, on the ground that she represents the unfolding consciousness of a corporate mind. We cannot, therefore, reject or belittle the development which culminated in the doctrine of Papal Infallibility as defined by the Vatican Council of 1870,* or, indeed, the earlier definition of the Immaculate Conception. For they have received the conscious assent of the whole of the vast Roman Catholic Communion, which is, on any count, the largest portion of the Catholic Church.

If, as the words of the Council appear to suggest, the Pope is infallible apart from any assent of the conscious mind of the Church, so that he need make no effort to ascertain that mind before promulgating an *ex cathedra* doctrine, the claim would have to be rejected as an entire repudiation of the process of Catholic development which we have considered, and for which process non-papal Catholicism, Anglican and Eastern, would then alone stand champion. If, on the other hand, it was made clear that the Pope could only speak *ex cathedra* when he had taken care to ascertain that he was voicing the mind of the

* "He (the Pope), by the divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, possesses that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding Truth and Morals: and that therefore such definitions of the said Roman Pontiff are of themselves unalterable, *and not from the consent of the Church.*"

Church, the proposition is entirely different. As we have seen, the mind of the Church has often expressed itself without the agency of a Council, and there is no reason why the official representative of that mind should not himself be spiritually guided when he is officially representing that mind.

It may, no doubt, be argued that Anglicanism, in repudiating the Papal claims at the Reformation, acted towards this development precisely as Presbyterianism acted towards the "development" of episcopacy—*i.e.*, it rejected that which had already been assented to by the mind of the Catholic West. But the utmost to which the Anglican Catholicism would appear to have been committed by the action of the Reformation is the proposition that a breach of communion with the Holy See does not of itself involve a cessation of Catholic sacramental life.

The Anglican attitude towards the whole of this question may be summed up as that of a careful attitude of inquiry. The appeal of Anglican Catholicism to the corporate mind of the Church is an appeal against a spiritual autocracy, and that position it cannot abandon. The Papal claims may be a development which is sanctioned by God, as a recognition of human needs, rather than a truth, such as the Trinity, which is presumably objective to any human requirements. These claims concern the nature of the administration of the Church on earth as distinct from a revelation of the nature of God. And these considerations need carefully to be weighed when we embark on any discussion as to whether the Papacy is a *de jure* or a *de facto* institution.

§ 4.

There is one further consideration which must be mentioned, and it is of the utmost importance.

It arises out of the probable objection against the refusal of Anglican Catholicism to commit itself at this stage to a formal acceptance or repudiation of these and other issues. Or it may be introduced when the question is asked by an individual inquirer —"Should I become an Anglican or a Roman Catholic?"

The consideration can perhaps best be stated in a negative form. Roman Catholicism and the Catholic Movement in the English Church must not be regarded as two parallel systems, the rival values of which one compares much as one decides whether to patronise the Great Western or the Southern Railway as a means of travelling from London to Plymouth. Viewed from this standpoint, it is easy enough to point to the uncertainty of Anglican authority, to the disunity apparent in the English Church, or to the differing degrees of devotion and doctrine and ceremonial which exist even within the Anglican Catholic Movement. Equally if we happen to be of the temperament which prefers intellectual liberty above all else and takes less kindly to disciplinary authority, the Anglican Movement possesses great advantages over Rome.

But it is inaccurate to adopt this standpoint. The Catholic Movement in the English Church should be regarded rather as the English Church gradually and cautiously feeling her way back to the possessions which she lost and the heritage which was partially taken from her. It is a movement and a development, not a concrete system. It possesses that promise and the advantages which a child possesses, as also the corresponding disadvantages of immaturity. It is the claim

that it is a far better and more natural process for this English Movement collectively to regain the full measure of the Catholic religion, than for the individuals concerned to act individually. It is the appeal of corporate loyalty and responsibility. It is through the English Church that we went out into the wilderness of separation from the rest of the Church: it is through the English Church that we should return.*

It would be a gross impertinence to pass judgment on the motives of those individuals who decide to secede to the Roman Catholic Communion, not only because we cannot assume that we appreciate those motives, but also because, from the Anglo-Catholic standpoint, their action involves no change of religion, and may indeed be the vocation to which God has called them. Only, from the particular aspect we are considering, it should be pointed out that mere impatience that the Movement does not act more precipitately, mere despair that it is not rushed into exact definitions and decisions, suggests an act of unfaith rather than of faith. Such persons already believe in the catholicity of the Church of Rome: they have to bring themselves to disbelieve in the catholicity of the Church of England. To those who see in this Anglican Catholic Movement the unmistakable marks of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, there is no question as to their corporate duty, whatever may happen to be their personal predilections.

And, for the English nation at large, the English

* Obviously the principle of corporate, rather than individual, action only applies, in a Catholic sense, where the corporate body is sacramentally alive. It would not be the duty of a Wesleyan to remain Wesleyan until his denomination had joined the Catholic Church. It is only the duty of those Anglicans to remain Anglican who believe that, in spite of separation, their Church is a living, sacramental entity.

Catholic Movement has a special appeal and message. After all these years of schism and separation from the rest of the Church, of prejudice and persecution and controversy, the wounds cannot quickly be healed. As the Movement learns and gains more, it is able to carry with it those who also must learn and gain by degrees. The gradual nature of its own development and conversion constitute its peculiar value to the English race. And no one who takes a wider view of the expanse of time can fail to wonder, not that the Catholic Movement has progressed so slowly, but that, in the face of immense difficulties, it has been supernaturally enabled, even at this early stage, to achieve so much.

CHAPTER THREE

Anglican criticism of the Movement

§ 1.

ANGLICAN opinion — we are now using that term to denote those members of the English Church who would not identify themselves as "Anglo-Catholics"—is, on the whole, more generous and tolerant towards the Catholic Revival than in previous years. Except for the extreme diehard Protestant, no normal Anglican wishes to persecute or prosecute the Movement into secession. Anglican authority is prepared, if we exclude so violent a controversialist as the Bishop of Birmingham, to recognise the right of the Movement to a place in the Anglican sun, provided that Anglo-Catholics are prepared to curtail their more "extreme" practices and to come into some sort of line with the rest.

There are some dangers and some advantages arising from this attitude. Perhaps it will be more suitable to take the darker side of the picture first. The claim that Anglo-Catholics, having obtained the freedom and recognition which they now enjoy, should be prepared to forego any developments which Anglican authority believes to be undesirable is one which appears so reasonable that it cannot but excite our sympathy. To claim yet further liberties, to accept so much and yet to demand more, appears, at first sight, to be the counsel of reckless and selfish anarchy.

If Anglican Catholicism is to enjoy the privileges of Anglican recognition, it must pay the price of confining itself to a standard which the English Bishops lay down as a legitimate maximum.

The fallacy of this attitude, however, is the same fallacy which was mentioned in the last chapter. It involves the theory that Anglican Catholicism is, or ought to be, a static form of religion rather than a movement. It is to be a static form, and the form is to be that of a strictly modified Catholicism. The Blessed Sacrament is to be reserved, but in such a way as to exclude public services of Adoration or Benediction. Cautious references to invocation of the saints may be allowed, but such devotion must be expressed in highly guarded terms. A compromised Catholicism must be the normal and permanent function of the Catholic element in Anglicanism. It must offer sixty per cent. only, and those who desire the full quota must go to Rome to find it.

And it must be made quite clear that such a principle is fundamentally artificial and unsound. It may be desirable and necessary, as a matter of immediate politics, to concede many practices which are not *per se* essential to Catholic profession. But as an ultimate principle the claim is vitiated because it is based on a complete error. If, as Anglo-Catholics believe, the English Church has retained her Catholic heritage, there can be no halting-point for Catholics within that Communion until they have recovered the whole of the Catholic religion. And that whole, as we have seen, may be regarded from the standpoint of the body of assent and consciousness which the mind of the Church in East and West has given. In other words, the Church in England must be able to function as freely in Catholic life and devotion as the Church in France or Germany or Russia. This unfolding

consciousness, this body of truth and discipline and devotion and practice, is not an artificial quantity, fragments of which an individual Communion can select at will. It is a supernatural revelation which must be taken, if at all, in its entirety. The tabernacle, the confessional, the shrines of our Lady have not returned because of the whim of a few extreme priests: they came back through the agency of individuals, but only because they are an inseparable part of the development of the Catholic religion. To check this development is to check the development of natural growth. It can be compared to the analogy of giving a growing boy a suit of clothes and of telling him that he may never wear clothes of any larger size. And if Anglicans demand, and any proportion of Anglo-Catholics concede, this theory of a modified, stunted Catholicism, they produce something which is not Catholic at all. There can from the very nature of the case be no such thing as a modified Catholicism.

It is far better that this should be stated clearly and even crudely, for the present situation is one in which the tendency is rather to disregard these facts.

Two objections may be raised against this claim. The first is that it suggests that Anglican Catholicism is asking for freedom to represent a mere replica of Roman Catholicism, which, it is said, would be unsuitable for the Anglican temperament; and the second is that this would involve disloyalty to Anglican formularies, which in view of Evangelical and Liberal influences, are bound to be a compromise rather than a fully Catholic liturgical code.

The first answer must be that of a simple negative. If the English Church were to adopt to-morrow every detail of Roman Catholic liturgy and ceremonial and devotion, she would not be one degree more Roman Catholic than she is now, as any Roman Catholic

theologian will agree. The difference is a difference of fundamental constitution, between the autocratic theory of the Church and the non-autocratic, between the Papacy and a denial that the Papacy is essential; it is not a mere difference of externals, as those Anglicans who raise these objections seem oddly to imagine. Those who are guilty of this confusion have failed altogether to appreciate the issue between ultramontane Roman Catholicism and a more liberal or constitutional Catholicism.

Secondly, any external expression of Anglican Catholicism will necessarily retain its own characteristics. Because it has the right to join in the developments of the rest of the West, it does not follow that it would do so in every particular. Catholicism is capable of an infinite variety of expression. There are vast differences of expression, for example, between the Teutonic form of Roman Catholicism and Roman Catholicism in Spain or Italy. All one can say is that it is improbable that a devotion or practice which has found a natural expression in the life of such widely differing races as the Austrians and the Poles, the Belgians and the American Roman Catholics, would be incompatible with English characteristics. English Catholicism is not likely to adopt what is foreign to itself, if the development is a natural growth rather than the result of a prussianised force. It must be free, entirely free, to grow naturally without the restraining bonds of an Elizabethan, Victorian, or neo-Georgian Prayer Book.

§ 2.

The second criticism of this Anglo-Catholic claim is one which virtually brings us to a consideration of the advantages offered by Anglicanism as a home for Anglican Catholicism.

This criticism, it will be remembered, is that a full development of Catholic practice would be disloyal to and incompatible with the formularies which the Church of England has drawn up, and with any formularies which she could ever draw up, so long as she comprises so many "schools of thought" within her borders. The answer to this is that the Prayer Book should be regarded, as in practice it has been regarded in the past, viz., as a minimum basis common to all Anglicans, and from which full liturgical and devotional development is freely permitted. This would be a perfectly workable system, for it has proved workable for almost a century. The Evangelical and the Liberal use the same Communion office, with certain omissions and interpolations, as the Anglo-Catholic: the result is to differ almost as much as it is possible for public worship to differ, but the framework is the same.

This permission to use the official framework, but freely to adapt it for Catholic or other purposes, is a perfectly workable and sensible system, and it ought to be unhesitatingly adopted by the English Church at the present stage. There would be no disloyalty, for such permission would be officially sanctioned. Nor should there be any suggestion of disloyalty to-day in claiming such freedom. The suggestion of disloyalty is based on an entirely false conception. For Anglicanism, like Anglican Catholicism, is not a static order. It is itself a constantly developing standard of worship. The type of service to be found in Anglican cathedrals and parish churches to-day is a development which eighteenth-century Anglicans would have regarded as outrageously "High Church." The Church of England has changed her form of worship more completely in the last hundred years than in any transformation she accomplished at the Reformation. It is therefore unreasonable to regard the present stage of Anglican

development as a stereotyped standard which will remain for all time, and any deviation from which is "disloyal." Any attempt to make the present or a future Prayer Book an exact and inclusive code will be based on a compromised, and therefore an artificial, principle, which has no reality in substance.

The tendency, however, in the Church of England to-day is unfortunately to destroy that great advantage which she possesses over all other religious bodies, and to establish a system which would be more disastrous and destructive to her future than any policy one can conceive. The Church of England is the only religious body in the world which contains within her borders, not only religious variations, but different religions. In the present condition of popular thought nothing could be more valuable, and it is a strange irony both that Roman Catholic and other critics should have seized on her strength as evidence of her weakness, and that Anglicans, and even many Anglo-Catholics, should wish to throw away the very possession which is her greatest asset. Those who judge practical efficiency by theoretical logic would say, and do say, that the Church of England is so disunited as to be an anarchy. Yet, with true English disregard for logic, the variety of the Church of England in practice works extraordinarily well. Catholics, Modernists, Moderates and Protestants combine with amazing efficiency and work together in increasingly harmonious relations. The Church of England shows little signs of an effete organisation. She is energetic in such internal organisations as the Church Assembly, she is battling with the utmost efficiency with the external difficulties confronting her, and she is continually extending her colonial jurisdiction. She is able somehow to find the balance between variety and confusion, between freedom and anarchy, between

co-operation and disunity. She daily disproves the jeremiads of the secular Press and the confident prophecies of her critics that she is about to split. Nothing of the sort happens or is likely to happen. Virtually the Church of England is a league of religions.

And, if this strange achievement can be sustained without the interference of well-meaning prussian-minded uniformists, the advantage is obvious. At a time when popular thought is farthest from the pole of institutionalism, when the majority of men refuse to bind themselves to any rigid institutional system, when religious thought is itself split into infinite varieties, it is admirable if a single organisation can manage to comprehend within itself these different religious systems. It is admirable because, so long as the effect is not unduly to cripple and stultify any one of these developments, their common basis, and the fraternity which necessarily follows their co-operation in one Communion, must influence each of them for good. All religions benefit from competition and contact with rival forms of thought. Watertight sectarian isolation has always been the highroad to decay. And Catholicism is no exception. It is when the Church has enjoyed a monopoly of power, when her critics have been persecuted into impotence, where indeed she excites no criticism or rivalry, that she has always been seen at her worst, and the abuses which have afflicted her have almost inevitably crept in.

It is, of course, evident that this system can be pressed to impossible extremes, to which, indeed, any system can be pressed. The English Church could not contain Mormons and Mohammedans: there must be limits to her tolerance and her boundaries. Common sense can well continue to dictate those limits. Nor will there be any escape from the occasional difficulties of administration caused by the

action of individual bishops or clergymen. But these difficulties do not impair the efficiency of the system, any more than the British Constitution, which is equally illogical, fails in the end to surmount the temporary crisis which a too vigorous Second Chamber may precipitate in its relations with the House of Commons.

But, if the Church of England is to continue, she must freely follow the path which she has begun to tread, she must use and not destroy the peculiar advantages which she enjoys. She must cease all hankering after clipping the wings of Anglican Catholicism or Evangelicalism, in order to produce a stunted Catholicism which is too Anglican to be Catholic. She must be prepared, and Anglo-Catholics must be prepared, to see Benediction in one parish and Evening Communion in the next. And, above all, she must abandon all attempts to perpetuate or create a single Anglican type. That is what it is to be feared so many Anglicans wish to do at the present juncture, and that way lies Anglican suicide. The average Anglican type of worship is almost the worst which can be imagined. The younger English generations are more alienated from the cold chastity of the ordinary parish-church service than from probably any other form of religious worship. The single Anglican type caused the Wesleyan secession in the eighteenth century, and it will lose the whole English nation in the twentieth. The stereotyped Prayer Book service is the one thing modern Englishmen do not want. Nothing is more pathetic than to hear some English bishops speaking of this official type of Anglicanism and appraising it as the keynote of the national character of the Church, when actually that moderate Anglicanism is emptying the pews of all but the remaining Victorian generations. Public school chapels are a

priceless asset for disallegiance from all subsequent religious observance: it is doubtful whether in any such institution half a dozen lay members of the conscript congregation could be found to express any enthusiasm for it. The one thing we do not want is a single Anglican type, or an Anglo-Catholicism which has clipped its wings, in order to retain a close affinity with that type.

For though the Church of England in her internal organisation has extraordinary advantages, she is in a parlous condition so far as her relation to the world outside is concerned. This is partly due to the period of secularisation through which we are passing, the mechanical age in which, as we have seen, a narrowed materialist and rationalist outlook has blunted our sense of spiritual intuition. But the revival will come. And if the Church of England has not tied herself down to the conception of a stereotyped institution with a uniform type of worship, she may benefit very considerably from that revival. It depends upon which road she takes.

§ 3.

It remains to deal with the objection which will naturally be raised, that this tolerance of different types is a self-confession that the Church of England cannot be the Catholic Church of the country, and cannot therefore be the justifiable home of any genuine Catholic revival.

This objection will come chiefly from Roman Catholics and others who are inclined to emphasise the institutional aspect of Catholicism without its corresponding opposite. This, in its extreme form, is to value the Catholic Faith much more because it is the official creed of the Catholic Church than to value

it for its own intrinsic truth. It is to value the form or organisation more than that which it enshrines. This is an inevitable human tendency, but it needs balancing if it is not to degenerate into religious formalism.

The conception of Anglican Catholicism existing side by side with non-Catholic bodies of thought is, however, admittedly abnormal. It suggests an abnegation of the necessity of Catholic institutionalism which could not by itself alone be sustained. And, at most, it is an abnormal, transitional process. We may think of the Church of England as a religious building, once used alone for Catholic worship, but at a later stage given over to other forms of service. It has never been deconsecrated. The Catholics revive in strength, and are at length permitted once more to say Mass in their own way, together with other Catholic offices. They recognise that for many years the building has been given over to other uses. They accept the position and share the use of the building, whatever may be the ultimate development.

The Anglo-Catholic claim is, as we have seen, that at least the sacramental machinery in the Church of England was preserved, and that, by reason of valid orders, the Communion Service which the Lowest Churchman holds is actually a valid Mass. This is a consistent justification for sharing the building with him. The virtual claim which is made is that it is not incompatible with a Catholic revival to share the building, to remain in communion, with those who do not believe the full Catholic Faith. Institutionally such a claim may be difficult. If the Church of Rome and the Eastern Churches did not exist, and Anglican Catholicism were the complete Catholic Church, such a position would be entirely impossible, for there must be a Catholic institution to present the Catholic religion. But, so long as Anglo-Catholicism remains in close

touch with the rest of the Church, its present missionary development will do it no harm, and is not inconsistent with its claims. Indeed, this should be a most valuable purgation. In an age of free-lance religion, contact with the lapsed masses will be rarely made by the perfected and hardened institutionalism. The chief hope for the future is a Catholicism which has a liberal mind and sympathy, and in its present school, with such bedfellows as Evangelicalism and Modernism, the growing child of Anglo-Catholicism is likely to produce that type of Catholicism which is most needed—provided that the Roman Catholic system is equally preserved as a counter-balance.

Anglicanism is a most excellent school in which for Anglican Catholicism to evolve. It possesses exactly those liberal traits, that resistance to autocratic tendencies, so marked an Anglican characteristic in the past, that sympathy with modern difficulty and doubt which is wider than conservative dogmatism, and which should breed a sane type of liberal Catholicism.

The mentality of the English Church, as was revealed in the Lambeth appeal for reunion, is perhaps the most Christian attitude which has ever been taken up in modern times by a religious institution. A Catholicism nurtured in such an environment would be invaluable in modern conditions, provided it is not the only type, provided there exists also the conservative and hardened institutionalism of Rome, and provided it is not entirely isolated from the steadying influence of the more institutional elements.

The real difficulty is that the averagely intelligent man of to-day regards Catholicism as essentially a crystallised, dogmatic system, conservative rather than tolerant of progressive inquiry. There is no reason in the least why Catholicism should only be so presented, but the fact remains that it has stood almost

exclusively for this ideal in the past. Normally, the Catholic answers modern doubt by hardening his dogmatic insistence on the very points on which the doubt is raised. He answers by fastening yet another bolt on the door. In a few cases this may be a most effectual policy. The applicant may be still more convinced that he has come to the right house, and he may be willing to be subjected to any personal humiliation in order to gain admission. But, in the vast number of cases, this is not so. There is an immense need for a rôle which Anglican Catholicism might be able to play. It is situated in the best school for such a rôle. And, however difficult and dangerous the adventure, the opportunities which unfold before it are worth the disadvantages.

I write at a moment when the future is extremely uncertain. The Anglican bishops seem to have lost their opportunity of effecting a generous settlement which would have made the New Prayer Book a basis rather than a concise code, and would thereby have rendered it possible to sanction a reasonable Anglo-Catholic supplementary Prayer Book. One solution, however, a far-sighted episcopate might even yet adopt. It could appoint Anglo-Catholic extra-diocesan bishops who would be in full communion with Canterbury, and whose ministry would provide constitutional liberty to Anglo-Catholics, without directly compromising the Anglican episcopate. In effect this would be a Uniat Church within the Church of England, a more desirable development than an interminable warfare between Anglo-Catholics, forced to interpolate the new Prayer Book, and Anglican uniformists, attempting to suppress such interpolations. The English Church, as she is, is not made for uniformity. The choice before the bishops lies between authorised or chaotic variety.

CHAPTER FOUR

Concluding reflections

§ 1.

THE conception which emerges from these summary impressions may be condemned on principle from various quarters, but it can at least be regarded, I think, as a clear and definite ideal.

In the last chapter we saw that, in view of the existing conditions, the Church of England is not at all a bad nursery for the Anglo-Catholic Revival. The Church of England is really a league of religions, and it is only when we attempt to regard her as a single entity, a complete institution, that her witness becomes imperfect. But, for all practical purposes, she should not be so regarded. She contains not only the Catholic Movement, but Protestant, Modernist, and Moderate religions. And, as we have seen, these abnormal conditions are not incompatible with Catholic principles. Provided there is a sacramental machinery and the machine has not committed itself officially to heresy, there seems to be no reason why, as a missionary movement, Anglo-Catholicism should not develop with these differing bedfellows.

There might be less justification, and certainly less likelihood of the continuance of the Church of England, if these various bodies were sects divided sharply from one another. The peculiar genius and safeguard of the English Church is that they are not so divided. If any diocesan or ruridecanal conference is taken, it would be impossible to partition off a number of

members and say, "Here Anglo-Catholicism begins, here Protestantism ends: at this point the split will occur." On the contrary, the differences are arranged by grades and merge into one another, without any line of demarcation. And therefore the Catholic Movement has the inestimable advantage of permeating the whole, rather than of attempting to convert it from outside, while, on the other hand, it is influenced and chastened and purified by its close contact with Liberal, Evangelical, and other Anglican tendencies.

We have also seen that the Catholic religion depends closely on the institution of a Catholic Church, and that therefore this strange anomaly of a Catholic movement in communion with those who do not accept the full Catholic Faith would not be possible as an entirety. There must be a Catholic Church. The answer to this is both that Anglo-Catholics hope one day fully to continue their policy of permeation in the English Church: and, also, that there would be in existence a fully developed institutional Catholicism, such as exists in the Roman and Orthodox Communions. It becomes all the more necessary, therefore, that Anglo-Catholicism should retain the closest spiritual touch with those bodies.

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, Anglo-Catholicism must retain this contact if it is to present the live Catholic Faith. It must never become an isolated provincialism. The contention that, as the Church is organically divided, only that body of faith and practice should be permissible which existed up to the schism, is one which is often made by Anglicans. But it is one which cuts clean across the conception of Catholic life. It is pure stagnation, an assumption that the consciousness of the Church has ceased to function for a number of centuries. The Church in England had already shared in the developments of

the West after the schism with the East. As she is still in the West, and if her new life is not to be suppressed, she must be free, carefully and cautiously no doubt, but without prohibitions, to find her way back to that stream of life and consciousness which courses through the body of the rest of the Church.

§ 2.

The dangers of isolation can be traced in the present stage of Anglo-Catholic development. The majority of Anglo-Catholic churches still reveal a somewhat amateur liturgical knowledge: in ceremonial the position has improved, though it is still imperfect. These things are not primary necessities, but it is well to be correct even in detail, and the moment an experiment is made away from the normal course of Catholic order, significant results begin to appear. To-day the Anglo-Catholic type of service is probably far too ornate and festal and lengthy to be effective as a missionary influence. Frequent processions, the custom of standing for hymns and psalms, and all that tends to perpetuate the rather heavy atmosphere of Anglican formality is no doubt a bar to extended influence. A simple "continentalism" is likely to be much more in accord with English needs. Variety in this respect tends to run riot and is irritating to the occasional visitor, though it is probably an inevitable stage of the development of a young movement. Anglo-Catholicism must not become a mere collection of fancy services, a series of experiments in liturgy and ceremonial.

At the moment the Movement suffers no doubt from being rather too much a collection of enthusiastic congregations—that is to say, it is composed too exclusively of a personnel which is peculiarly

interested and prone to religious interests. The Movement must extend to more average types and must include a quota of people who tend to be temperamentally indifferent to religion and disinclined to constant church-going.

The need in the world of to-day for a presentation of Catholicism which is "liberal" in its mentality, has been repeatedly urged in previous chapters. Inasmuch as formal institutionalism tends to reproduce the more severely conservative and dogmatic attitude, and as the peculiar circumstances of the English Church render it weakest on its institutional side, Anglican Catholicism has a unique opportunity for fulfilling the opposite need. Yet there must almost inevitably be a number of Anglo-Catholics who would prefer to adopt the uncompromisingly institutional and dogmatic standpoint. Particularly is this found to be the case in social problems which the claims of religion affect — such as, for example, birth-control. The "liberal" attitude is to listen unprejudicially to the case which modern thought is able to present and only then to pronounce judgment. The "conservative" attitude is to reply that the Church has already decided, and that therefore there is no case to hear. There are two comments which must be made in regard to this issue. The first is that extreme conservatism implies a disinclination to believe that the Church has power to develop and, by development, to revise her attitude, where no repudiation of an actual doctrinal truth is involved. If the whole Church became convinced that the Holy Spirit was guiding her in a belief, for example, that women might be admitted to the priesthood, there would seem then to be no bar to the right of the Church to allow such admission. I am not, of course, suggesting either that such a development would be desirable

or probable, I am merely denying the limitation to the power which the Church could exercise, and emphasising that it is an error to limit one's imagination as to the extent to which the Church could act, if she saw fit. She is not bound, therefore, to say, "I have no power to modify my attitude," for, short of repudiation of fundamental truth, she has full power. The second comment is that Anglican Catholicism is unfavourably placed for ultra-dogmatic methods. Those Anglo-Catholics who would wish entirely to adopt the Roman Catholic attitude towards such problems as birth-control have the disadvantage of not possessing so rigid an institutional instrument as the Papacy. Anglican Catholicism is not constituted to be ultra-dogmatic: it is the "liberal" presentation which seems to be its special vocation to fulfil.

The "liberal attitude" is an "attitude" rather than a conclusion. A liberal Anglo-Catholicism might, in all social problems, arrive at the same conclusions as Rome. But, difficult as is the path, there remains the immense need of a form of Catholicism, co-existing with the more institutional form, which will present less the rigidly authoritative and dogmatic attitude than a sympathy and willingness to explore fresh needs and modern claims, in the light of the tradition and revelation which the Church believes that she holds.

These types of social problems are usually the issues wherein the Church and popular opinion clash most vigorously. The Church seems to the average man to be consistently on the kill-joy, tyrannical side, always defending impossible anachronisms, and insisting on outworn prohibitions. But this divergence is fundamentally due to the difficulty of reconciling the ideal with the practical. The primary duty of the Church must be to proclaim the highest ideals, without

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compromise and without wavering. That, ideally, husband should be eternally faithful to wife, or that the sex relationships should exist for the highest motives and not for self-indulgence, is really a principle on which there is no difference of opinion. The controversy arises only in the application of the ideal to the circumstances of human life, and here there is a double danger, the danger both of denobling the standards of purity, and of turning a deaf ear to the frailties and consequent needs of human nature. It is the eternal conflict between the ideal and the impossibility of expecting man to fulfil the ideal. But some of the difficulty in the controversy would be lessened if critics would remember that, nevertheless, the first aim of a Church must obviously be to preach the ideal and to proclaim this standard among all the changing circumstances of modern life.

Finally, we return to the conclusion that the vitality and energy of the Anglican Catholic Movement is one of the most remarkable features of the twentieth century. It is an amazing religious revival. It has, as we have seen, a peculiar chance for developing a Catholicism with a non-obscurantist mentality, possessing a sympathy and presenting an attitude which is more in accord with the general trend of modern needs than a more rigid and conservative institution. The problems and dangers before us are heavy. But, when we recall the record of the past, and the victories over apparently insuperable obstacles, we may be pardoned perhaps for an invincible optimism. It is more than optimism: it is a conviction that here the hand of the Holy Spirit is plainly evident, and that he who has guided us so far will lead us on to the fuller purposes for which he has called us into being.

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Why I believe

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